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SHAKESPEARE'S

KING LEAR

EDITED ON MOST MODERN AND SCIENTIFIC LINES
WITH USEFUL APPENDICES, INTRODUCTION
PARAPHRASE, NOTES, EXPLANATIONS
AND
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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INTRODUCTION

TO

SHAKESPEARE

"*Soul of the Age !*
The applause ! delight ! the wonder of our Stage !
. . . .

Thou art a Monument, without a tomb
And art alive still, while thy Book doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give."

—*Ben Jonson.*

"*He was not of an age, but for all time !*"

—*Ben Jonson.*

LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare at Stratford

The following entry in the register of baptisms is relied upon fixing Shakespeare's birth approximately :

"1564, April 26, Gulielmus Filius Johannes Shakespeare"
[William son (of) John Shakespeare]

The practice was to baptize the child within a few days of its birth : so 23rd April was fixed on as Shakespeare's birthday.

His birthplace was Stratford-upon-Avon in Warwickshire. Round the town are more or less distant hills, and the view of it from the nearest, the Welcombe Hills, shows the town nestling in the broad valley.

His father, John Shakespeare, appears to have been a glover. He was besides a corn-dealer or farmer, and trader in all kinds of agricultural produce. William Shakespeare was the first son and third child of John Shakespeare, and of Mary Arden, daughter of a husbandman and landowner. John Shakespeare throve in worldly life till he rose to be Mayor of Stratford, and then its chief alderman,—and thus, he claimed a coat of arms as a gentleman.

It is usually held that Shakespeare went to the free Stratford Grammar School at the age of seven and stayed there till he was fourteen or sixteen at the latest, when he picked up his "small Latin and less Greek". If his picture of "the whining schoolboy, with his satchel and shining morning face, creeping like a snail unwilling to school" be not impersonal then we may suppose that Shakespeare was at some school, and had written from his personal experience. There are frequent references to schoolboy's pranks in his plays. "The blessed sun of heaven prove a micher (*truant*) and eat blackberries !" (*I Henry, IV, II.* iv). It is pleasing to the fancy to imagine that Shakespeare had his full quota of a schoolboy's experience and pranks. He must have gone bird's nesting, and joined the May-day. Christmas, and New Year's games helped to make hay, gone to harvest-homes, and sheep-shearings (*Winter's Tale* IV. iii), fished (*Much Ado*, III. i), ran with the harriers (*Venus and Adonis*, st. 113-

118), and loved a dog and horse (*Venus and Adonis*, st. 44, 52 ; *Midsummer Night's Dream*, IV. i ; *Richard II*, V. v.; *I Henry IV*, II. i. etc) as dearly as every boy in England did.

Lately Professor J. D. Wilson (*The Essential Shakespeare*, p. 41) has questioned the Grammar School education of Shakespeare, and imagines that Shakespeare's father being an ardent Catholic, the boy might have received his education as a singing boy in the service of some great Catholic nobleman, which explains how he became an actor.

Now whether Shakespeare had any schooling or not, he seems to have had a keen and alert mind which amassed a rich store of learning, quaint and miscellaneous. Lowell writes, "What kind of culture Shakespeare had is uncertain ; how much he had is disputed ; that..must be clear to whoever considers the question."

John Shakespeare later appears to have fallen on evil days, and his son was consequently withdrawn from school. What Shakespeare did after he had left school is uncertain, and must be left to the fancy of every reader. All that we can be certain of is that he stayed for some time longer at Stratford, that he noted the many rural scenes around him, took stock of the wild flowers and the birds, and learnt much of the lore of dogs and horses which he displays in his works. His frequent references to sports, hawking, coursing and hunting, make us believe that he must have seen all of these frequently and probably have indulged in them personally.

It is on record that Shakespeare at the age of eighteen was married to Anne Hathaway, his senior by eight years, by special licence on November 28, 1582 and the issue of the marriage, Susanna, a daughter, was baptized on May 26, 1583. His twins —Hamnet and Judith—were baptized on February 2, 1585. Thus, when he was hardly twenty-one, he was burdened with three children and a wife eight years older than himself—and it is suggested that he must have worried about them.

Whether his marriage was a happy one must remain an open question. Shakespeare of course dwells on the evils of a woman wedding one younger than herself in *Twelfth Night*, II. iv.; of the disdain and discord which grow through such incompatible union in the *Tempest*, IV. i ; of a wife's jealousy in the *Comedy of Errors*, V. i. But the inference must be left to every reader as it pleases him. J. D. Wilson asserts, "In any case—

to nail one more slander to the counter—there is no ground whatever for imagining that his married life was an unhappy one, which is not the same thing as saying that he himself was a model husband."

His domestic entanglements might have been the reason for his abruptly leaving Startford to seek his fortunes elsewhere. Tradition gives a different cause : that Shakespeare joined some wild young fellows in breaking into Sir Thomas Lucy's park at Charlecote, about three miles from Stratford, and stealing his deer, for which, and for writing an impossibly bad ballad against Sir Thomas, the latter so persecuted the poet that he had to leave Stratford. But it is all uncertain. It is, however, generally supposed, though without any sure ground, that Shakespeare left Stratford in or about 1586. "The Queen's Players" paid a visit to Stratford in 1587. It is said by some that this was probably the turning point in Shakespeare's life. At any rate, sooner or later, he left his birth town for London, and took the way to fame and fortune.

Shakespeare in London

The legend that Shakespeare, on the first appearance in London, employed himself in holding horses' heads outside theatre doors, or worked in a printer's or lawyer's office, is now discredited. The earliest notice of Shakespeare in London occurs in 1592 in the death-bed effusion of Robert Greene—*A Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, in which Shakespeare is referred to as "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers" and as "Johannes factotum". Henry Chettle, who edits Greene's pamphlet, makes a nice apology to Shakespeare. It may be inferred from Greene's ill-natured allusion that Shakespeare must have been actively engaged in writing plays by 1592, that at least some of them were based upon the works of other men.

The playhouse with which tradition connects him was called "The Theatre," and was built by a player and joiner, James Burbage in 1577, in the fields outside the City Walls, on the west of Bishopgate Street, in Shoreditch. In 1598, it was pulled down and in 1599 rebuilt as "The Globe," on Bankside, Southwark.

The records of Shakespeare's life and doings henceforth are fairly continuous. Not long after he found a patron in Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton. In 1596 he seems to have

been well off enough to apply for a coat of arms. On August 11, 1596, Shakespeare's only son, Hamnet, died and was buried at Stratford. His son's death must have been a great blow to Shakespeare, wishing as he did to found a family. Now he seems to have been growing rich. In 1597 he bought for £50 the largest house in his native town, New Place, and later, he made further investments in land in the neighbourhood. When "The Theatre" was rebuilt as "The Globe," Shakespeare was taken in as a partner—"a fellowship in a cry of players" (*Hamlet*, III. ii). The admission as a partner in the profits of the *New Globe* marks definitely his success in London better than his purchase of New Place at Stratford.

In the beginning of the year 1601, Essex's rebellion broke out, and for his share in it, Lord Southampton was imprisoned in the Tower whence he was not released until James I's accession in 1603. Shakespeare's fortunes thus suffered a temporary eclipse. On March 24, 1603, Queen Elizabeth died, and, as Chettle complains, "the silver-tongued Melicent" (Shakespeare) did not "drop from his honied Muse one sable tear." On James's accession, Shakespeare's company, originally entitled "The Lord Chamberlain's Servants," assumed the title of "The King's Players."

Shakespeare at Stratford Again

Shakespeare's life in London was an unbroken record of success and growing prosperity. "The rest of his story, so far as it can be read in the records, is one of continued good fortune. In the worldly sense, at least, Shakespeare had become, and remained till his death, a prosperous and wealthy man. The numerous documentary references to him that have come down to us are mainly concerned with property bought, money sued for in the courts, or plays of his which were acted or published."

In or about 1609, after the period of his great tragedies, Shakespeare is supposed to have left London for Stratford. "There is nothing definite to fix the change to any one year; but the internal evidence of his plays and sonnets, as well as the fact that he must, before he made his will, have sold or released to his partners all his interest in the Globe and Blackfriars' profits and in his plays almost obliges us to conclude that his leaving town dates from 1690 or thereabouts." Since his retirement to Stratford he seems to have been once suing for the

recovery of his share in the tithes which he had bought in 1605, and to have purchased a house and a piece of ground near the Blackfriars Theatre. This Blackfriars House was part of a large property belonging to the Bacon family and when this was cut up and sold, Bacon's widow Anne (mother of the great Francis Bacon) retained the title-deeds. On April 26, 1615, Shakespeare associated himself with his fellow-buyers in a Bill Complaint to recover the title-deeds, and the widow's heir, Matthew Bacon, was ordered by the Lord Chancellor to bring the deeds to court.

Having executed his will on March 25, Shakespeare died at New Place on April 23, 1616, and was buried in the chancel of Stratford Church on 25th. The only report as to the cause of his death is in the Diary (printed in 1839) of the Rev. John Ward, who was appointed Vicar of Stratford in 1662, that "Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had an eerie meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted."

Chronology of Chief Incidents in Shakespeare's Life

1564. April 26, Shakespeare baptized.
1571. At the age of seven, according to the custom of the time, Shakespeare's school-life probably began.
1575. Queen Elizabeth visited the Earl of Leicester at Kenilworth.) Shakespeare's father might have taken him to witness the Kenilworth festivities (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. iii).
1578. Shakespeare left school. His father's fortunes at a low ebb.
1582. Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway.
1583. May 26, Shakespeare's daughter, Susanna, baptized.
1585. February 2, Shakespeare's twin children, Hamnet and Judith, baptized.
1586. Shakespeare left Stratford.
1592. Shakespeare referred to in Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*.
1593. *Venus and Adonis* published and dedicated to Southampton.
1594. *Titus Andronicus* acted by the Earl of Sussex's men.
1596. August 11, Shakespeare's son, Hamnet buried.
1597. May 4, Shakespeare bought New Place.

1598. Francis Mere's *Palladis Tamia* published, which contained a list of Shakespeare's plays up-to-date in a chronological order. Shakespeare acted in Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour*.

1599. Shakespeare purchased shares in the Globe.

1601. Essex executed, and Southampton imprisoned. John Shakespeare buried.

1602. May 1. Shakespeare purchased one hundred and seven acres of arable land which he added to New Place.

1603. February 2. Shakespeare's company performed before the Queen at Richmond.

1604. March 15. Shakespeare took part in the procession on the occasion of James's entry.

1607. Susanna married to John Hill.

1608. September 9. Susanna's mother buried. Shakespeare established himself at New Place.

1609. *Sonnets* published.

1613. *The Tempest* performed at the festivities in celebration of the marriage of Princess Elizabeth with the Elector Frederick. The Globe burnt down.

1616. January 25. Shakespeare made his will, not signed till March 25.
April 23. Died.
April 25. Buried in the chancel of Stratford Church.

Chronology of Shakespeare's Plays

Evidence—External and Internal.

Plays, before or on publication, by publishers, in the *Registers* of the Stationers' Company incorporated by Queen Mary in 1557. (2) The publications of the Poems and Plays. (3) Allusions in contemporary books, diaries, letters, etc.

The *Stationers' Registers*, and publications establish the dates of two Poems and six Plays, all printed in Shakespeare's lifetime, except *As You Like It* which is mentioned in the *Stationers' Registers*, and of which the date can be conjectured to be 1600.

Below is given the table of results :
Venus and Adonis entered and published in 1593 ;
Lucrece entered in 1594 ;

Henry IV entered in 1597 and published in 1598 ;
Much Ado entered in 1600 ;
Hamlet entered in 1602, published in 1603-4 ;
Lear entered in 1607, published in 1608 ;
Pericles entered in 1608, published in 1609.

Allusions in contemporary books, etc., give the dates of five plays : *Romeo and Juliet*, before 1595 ; *Julius Caesar*, 1601 ; *Twelfth Night*. *February* 1602 ; *Winter's Tale*, 1611 ; *Henry VIII*, 1613.

The books and diaries which supply the dates are as follows : Weever's Sonnet in his *Epigrammes*, 1595 for *Romeo and Juliet* ; Weever's *Mirror of Martyrs*, 1601 for *Julius Caesar* ; Manningham's *Diary*, Feb. 2, 1601-2 for *Twelfth Night* ; Dr. Forman's *Diary* for *The Winter's Tale*, 1611 ; Thomas Lorkin's letter to Sir Thomas Puckering dated "London, this last of June, 1613" and John Chamberlaine's letter to Sir Ralph Winwood, dated London, 8th July, 1613, both of which refer to the burning of Globe, or Playhouse, during the performance of *Henry VIII*.

Internal evidence consists of allusions in the plays to past or contemporary events, and also relies upon the Style and Temper of the works. Allusions in the plays to contemporary events suggest positively the date of one play, *Henry V*. The Prologue to Act V refers to the Earl of Essex :

"Now the general of our gracious empress :
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming ;
Bring rebellion broached on his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit
To welcome him !"

The Prologue to Act I refers to the newly-built wooden "O", or Globe Theatre, opened in 1599 :—

"Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France ? or may we cram,
Within this wooden O, the very casques,
That did affright the air at Agincourt ?"

The reference to the great earthquake of April 6, 1580 in *Romeo and Juliet* helps to determine its date :—

"Come Lammas-eve at night shall be fourteen,
Susan and she—God rest all Christian souls—

Were of an age : well, Susan is with God ;
She was too good for me : but, as I said,
On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen ;
That shall she marry ; I remember it well.
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years."

This gives either 1591 or 1593 for the date of the play.

For the rest of Shakespeare's plays, *i.e.*, twenty-six out of thirty-seven plays, we have to depend on the style and temper of the works. First we may take the evidence of metre. If we compare *The Comedy of Errors*, an earlier play, with *The Winter's Tale*, we may deduce the following results : In *The Errors*, *the end-stopped* lines *i.e.*, *lines* with a pause at the end, are a marked feature, but in *The Winter's Tale* the lines are *run-on* (*i.e.*, the sense is carried from one line to the next) with a fair proportion of weak or light endings which help the process, and varied central pauses—thus the lines in *The Errors* are stiff and formal, while in *The Winter's Tale* they have the ease and freedom of natural talk. Further in the *Errors* lines are regular—five iambic feet—but in *The Winter's Tale* there is sometimes an extra or eleventh syllable or even a twelfth syllable. The results may be thus tabulated :

(*i*) Run on lines in *The Errors* : 1 in 7·65.
Winter's Tale 1 in 2·3.
(*ii*) Extra-syllables in *The Errors* : *nil.*
Winter's Tale 1 in 1·75.
(*iii*) Weak-endings in *The Errors* : *nil.*
Winter's Tale : 1 in 4·2.

The proportion of rhyming lines is another test. *Love's Labour's Lost*, a very early play, may be compared with the latest plays, *The Tempest* and *The Winter's Tale.*

Love's Labour's Lost........1,028 rhyme, to 579 blank, or 1 to .56.

The Tempest........2 rhyme, to 1,458 blank, or 1 to 779.

The Winter's Tale........0 rhyme, to 1,825 blank, or 1 to infinity.

So we may compare the proportion of *run-on* to *end-stopped lines* in three of the earliest and latest plays :—

Earliest plays :—
Love's Labour's Lost......1 in 18·14.
The Comedy of Errors....1 in 10·7
The Two Gentlemen of Verona....1 in 10.

Latest plays :—

The Tempest....1 in 3·02
Cymbeline....1 in 2·52
The Winter's Tale....1 in 2.12

Dowden, in his *Growth of Shakespeare's Mind and Art*, thus sums up the characteristics of Shakespeare's early plays—(i) frequency of rhyme in various arrangements ; (ii) occurrence of rhymed doggerel verse ; (iii) comparative infrequency of feminine or double ending, of weak ending, of unstopped line ; (iv) regular internal structure of the line ; (v) frequency of classical allusions ; (vi) frequency of puns and conceits ; (vii) wit and imagery drawn out in detail to the point of exhaustion ; (viii) clowns who are, by comparison with the later comic characters, outstanding persons in the play, told off specially for clownage; (ix) the presence of termagant or shrewish women ; (x) soliloquies addressed rather to the audience (to explain the business of the piece, or the motive of the actors) than to the speaker's self; (xi) symmetry in the grouping of persons.

Now proceeding from Shakespeare's early to later plays we can trace the changes in style and metre which marked the progress of Shakespeare's mind and spirit. He soon gave up the doggerel, the excessive word-play, the quip and crank of his early plays, their puns, conceits and occasional bombast : he curbed his exuberant fancy by the control of the higher imagination and poetic creation ; he subdued the rhetoric of his historical plays ; he exchanged the playfulness of fancy, the verbal ingenuity, the farce of the early plays for the death-struggle of the passions, the terror of his tragedies, laying bare the inmost recesses of the human soul ; and then passed serene and tender, to the pastorals and romances of his later age.

A Note on Folio and Quarto : The term *folio* is applied to a book, the pages of which are formed by a sheet of paper folded once, and the term *quarto*, to a book, the papers of which are formed by a sheet of paper folded twice. All the plays of Shakespeare except *Pericles* were used in Folio (known as the first Folio), in 1623 by his friends and fellow-actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell, and dedicated to the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery. Only seventeen of Shakespeare's plays were printed in Quarto during his life-time. The first Folio is of great value, it is, in some instances,

more correct than Quartos, and contains seventeen plays, of which no Quarto editions exist. The second Folio appeared in 1632, the third in 1663-64, the fourth in 1685. Single plays appeared in Quarto form during Shakespeare's lifetime and throughout a large part of the seventeenth century.

Classification of Shakespeare's Plays in the Folio of 1623

Histories

Henry VI.
Richard III.
Richard II.
King John.
Henry IV.
Henry V.
Henry VIII.

Tragedies.

Titus Andronicus.
Romeo and Juliet.
Julius Caesar.
Othello.
King Lear.
Macbeth.
Antony and Cleopatra.
Coriolanus.
Cymbeline.
Hamlet.
Timon of Athens.

Comedies.

All's Well that Ends Well.
Measure for Measure.
Troilus and Cressida.
Taming of the Shrew.
Merry Wives of Windsor.
Much Ado About Nothing.
As You Like It.
Twelfth Night.
Love's Labour's Lost.
Comedy of Errors.
Two Gentlemen of Verona.
Midsummer Night's Dream.
Merchant of Venice.
Winter's Tale.
Tempest.

Development of Shakespeare's Dramatic Art

First Period

The following plays belong to the First Period (1587-1594 ?) *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Midsummer Night's Dream*. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Romeo and Juliet* (with the poem of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and probably the Troilus part of *Troilus and Cressida*), *Richard II*, 1, 2 and 3, *Henry VI*, and *Richard III*.

In the First Period Shakespeare served his dramatic apprenticeship. In the earliest of his plays he shows an extraordinary facility in expression and a rare gift of phrasing which ever distinguished his work. But the verse form with the practice of rhyming and five rigid iambic feet did not make for appropriate dramatic expression. Even when rhyme was not used, the verse seemed to be crude and strained.

The use of Blank Verse by Marlowe in *Tamburlaine* (1587) opened a new era in dramatic composition. The possibilities of blank verse were but partly revealed by Marlowe in his creation of glowing forms and gorgeous scenes, inspired by the stirring events and great stories of danger and discovery of Elizabethan days. Shakespeare saw his opportunity. From blank verse he drew music and colour—myriad-toned and myriad-timed. He could express through its medium the delicate beauty of a flower, the most gentle and the most unruly of emotions, the sadness of the death-scene, the splendid pageantry of state and arms.

In this striving towards freedom of expression, Shakespeare first began to discard rhyme, and resort to such metrical devices, as *double endings*, *light* and *weak endings*. In *Love's Labour's Lost* there are only 9 double endings (*i.e.*, extra unaccented syllables at the end of lines), but in *Richard III*, which ends the First Period there are 570 double endings. In the plays of the first period there are only 17 light endings and 2 weak endings, but in the later play of *Antony and Cleopatra* alone there are 71 light and 28 weak endings—and they are ever on the increase in his later plays. A light ending is a monosyllable at the end of a line, on which the voice can dwell in reading and a weak ending is a monosyllable at the end of a line, which both, in sense and pronunciation, is carried on to the next line. *And* is a light, and *where* is a weak ending in the following verse from *Coriolanus*, *III. ii.*

"Which else would put you to your fortune, *and*
The hazard of much blood,
I would dissemble with my nature, *where*
My fortunes and my friends at stake, required
I should do so in honour."

This external evidence apart, the plays of the First Period are linked together in plot and expression—they are mainly lyrical in character and are steeped in the gaiety of youth. In *Love's Labour's Lost* Shakespeare ridicules contemporary mannerisms, and affectations, but the noteworthy fact is Shakespeare's use of *mistaken identity* which is the source of so much fun in his early comedies, and the symmetrical plot. The symmetrical plot and mistake-identity devices are employed again in *The Comedy of Errors*, *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Characters are

not sufficiently individualised in the early plays. *Richard III* is a one-character play, written under the shadow of Marlowe. *Richard II* has plenty of rhyme, quibbles and weak lines, matched by consistencies in the central figure—its only relieving feature is its lyrical fervour. As regards the art of construction it may be noted that Shakespeare first intermingles themes in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* which develops into a plot with an under-plot in later plays ; but in *Romeo* and the two *Richards*, Shakespeare discovers and applies the principle of causing the action to revolve round, and depend upon, one or two central figures, of making character and not incident the source of the action—a principle which is fully carried out in his tragedies. We note also that there is an increasing command over materials displayed by Shakespeare, and an increasing insight into character and mind. The lyricism of Shakespeare's early plays comes to full flower in *Romeo* and in *The Two Gentlemen*. The poems, *Venus Lucrece*, are the work of a student who is intoxicated with beauty—the beauty of the material universe as well as the beauty of mind and imagination.

Second Period

To the Second Period (1594 to 1601) belong *King John*, *Merchant of Venice*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, 1 *and* 2 *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, and the *Sonnets*.

In the Second Period the art of characterization is considerably advanced. First he touches on many different phases of life and presents a gallery of portraits. The political plays (*John*, *Henry IV*, *Henry V*) epitomize the great era of Elizabeth's reign, and embody her political insight and wisdom.

Henry IV advises his son that foreign wars unite a nation, and Henry V acts on that policy : the questions of Elizabeth's sovereignty, her right to the crown, are reflected in *John* and *Henry IV*, as are the Elizabethan necessity of preventing foreign intervention in national politics, and the principle that however vexatious a controversy concerning the right to rule might be, it was less important than the duty of ruling strongly, wisely and well. Throughout is the plea for national unity : throughout is the exultation of national strength, pride of England, love of its green fields and its sea-bound shores,

rejoicing in its conquests, faith in its power, and hope for its future.

As illustrative of Shakespeare's insight into character, it may be pointed out that he shows wonderful knowledge of the Celtic temperament in these plays ; Glendower in 1 *Henry IV*, credulous, superstitious, passionate , overruled in his contracts by prophecies ; Gower in 2 *Henry IV* ; Fluellen in *Henry V*, one who loves argument, quotes precedent, forgets names, likes literature, and is brave and hardy, and lastly Sir Hugh Evans in the *Merry Wives*, a most "vehement" man.

Secondly, Shakespeare shows rare skill and delicacy in drawing the women characters. Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* is the beginning of that succession of beautiful types of splendid womanhood, whose watchword is *devotion*, and whose beauty and purity touch their character with pathos in their struggles against fate. Portia foreshadows Helena, Ophelia, Isabella, Desdemona and Cordelia. Rosalind and Celia of *As You Like It* are of an ideal cast. Rosalind and Celia, wandering wearily with their devoted Touchstone, through the wild, wonderful ways of a strange forest, remind one of Virgil's *Eclogues*, where love-lorn shepherds tell the story of their love-sorrow in metrical cadences. There is a less pleasant and more passionate note in *All's Well That Ends Well*.

The links that connect this period with the first may be noted : The magnificent lyrical outburst of *Romeo* is echoed in *The Merchant of Venice*, when Jessica, so like Juliet, and Lorenzo tell over again the story of their love ; Marlowe's influence appears again in Shylock, and to Marlowe Shakespeare pays a tribute in *As You Like It* :

"Dead Shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
Whoever loved that loved not at first sight ?"

Rosalind and Celia repeat in part the story of Julia and Silvia in the *Two Gentlemen*, and the device of mistaken identity, employed in the *Dream* and *Errors*, is used again in *Twelfth Night*. For *Venus* and *Lucrece* we have the "sugared" *Sonnets*—and the sonnets strike the note of gloom and despair which prelude the Third Period of Soul-racking tragedies.

Lastly, the *metrical advance* in the Second Period. The proportion of double endings increases from 8 percent in the First Period to 11·2 percent in the Second. Light and weak

ending in the First Period are as rare as ·162 percent ; in the Second Period they rise to ·359 percent. The ratio between rhyme and blank verse in the First Period is as 1 : 3·3 ; in the Second Period it is only as 1 : 10·04.

THIRD PERIOD

To the Third Period (1601—1609) belong *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Measure for Measure*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *King Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Cariolanus*, *Timon of Athens*.

In the tragedies, Shakespeare deals with the problems of life and fate, evil-doing, or error, or excess followed by punishment, and also the wider net spread by evil, in which the innocent are often involved, with the suggestion of a dark power which crushes down the wicked and the innocent alike. As side-issues there are the stings of ingratitude and treachery — *motif* which is further worked out in his plays of the Fourth Period, with the crowning result of forgiveness and reconciliation.

In *Julius Caesar*, Caesar pays the penalty of ambition, and Brutus falls through error—or want of judgment—and there is the suggestion of dark forces which man reckons without. The strain of speculation in Brutus anticipates Hamlet, and in Hamlet speculation usurps the place of action. In *Hamlet* the bright and happy life of the young prince is darkened by the lust and ingratitude of his mother, and eclipsed by the revelation of his ungrateful uncle's foul murder of his father. Of the dark forces that drag down the hero of Shakespeare's tragedy there is almost always an innocent woman victim ; so Ophelia in *Hamlet*. *Measure for Measure* is a comedy. Against the gloom of lust and filth which touches this comedy rises, radiant as a star, the figure of the "enskyed and sainted" Isabella. In her is recaptured the breath of his earlier comedies. There is a note of stark realism in *Troilus and Cressida*. Hector alone is untouched by this realism—and Hector with his sentiment of honour and impracticability recalls Brutus. In *Othello* the *treachery* of the trusted friend, Iago, ruins the hero and involves the innocent Desdemona in destruction, the gloom of which is only relieved by the idyll of the hero's winning and wooing his bride. In *Macbeth* Shakespeare, for the first time, introduces a woman who appears to be unsexed and all for ambition. The idea of moral

retribution—death of Lady Macbeth, under the pangs of conscience and death of Macbeth from Macduff's sword—is nowhere more clearly worked out than in this tragedy. Then follow the terrors and horrors of *Lear*. "Ingratitude of daughters, treachery of a son driving father to despair, to madness, and to death,—infidelity of a wife, plotting her husband's death, and poisoning her sister, to gratify her own lust, the heavens themselves joining in the wild storm of earthly passions"—these are at the core of the tragedy of *Lear*. *Antony and Cleopatra* is admired for its gorgeous Eastern colour and the most wonderful study of a woman that Shakespeare has ever made. "In the earlier group of tragedies, from *Julius Caesar* to *Lear*, a *woman* is the passive confident, the helpless victim, the good angel, or the deadly foe, of the tragic hero; in the late group she becomes a companion spirit, holding him by the spell of personality, of passion, or of blood. Sex has no part in the sinister magnetism of Lady Macbeth but in the "strong toil of grace" cast by Cleopatra over Antony—the magnetism of sex becomes a source of tragedy, less harrowing indeed than the tragedy of Othello or Lear, but ever richer in consummate poetry." *Coriolanus* is linked, on the one hand, with *Julius Caesar* by its picture of mob-mentality and with *Lear* by portraying the self-will and pride of the hero. But in *Coriolanus* is struck the keynote to the plays of the Fourth Period : "Thinkest thou it honourable for a nobleman still to remember wrongs ?" In *Timon* there is real hardening of the soul of the hero, not by crime, but by ingratitude. He cries, "I am *misanthropos*, and hate mankind." And so he ends, "who, alive, all living men did hate."

Now the metrical advance. In the Second Period the double endings are 11·2 percent ; in the Third Period they increase to 22·08 percent. In the Second Period the light and weak endings are ·359 percent; in the Third Period they increase to 1·43 percent. The ratio of rhyme to blank verse in the Second Period is as 1 : 10·04, in the Third Period it is as 1 : 25·8.

Fourth Period

To the Fourth Period (1609 to 1612) belong *Pericles*, *The Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Henry VIII*. Shakespeare passes from the storm and stress of the Third Period to "a great peacefulness of light," a harmony of earth and heaven.

The new notes are the notes of mercy and forgiveness, reunion and reconciliation. Two features especially distinguish the plays of the Fourth Period.

First, there is a tender touch about the women. We may contrast the women of the Third with the women of the Fourth Period. Portia, the gentle wife of Brutus, is lost amid plots and assassinations. Ophelia is denied her love and is drowned. Isabella, sorely tried by temptations, barely escapes ruin. Desdemona is crushed by fate against which her simple and perfect womanhood cries out in vain. Poor Lady Macduff is deserted and murdered. Cordelia is disowned, banished from her father—is wronged and slain. Chaste Octavia is wedded to Antony and deserted. Volumnia and Virgilia are made the instruments of that ruin which they sought to avert. Now what gracious tenderness environs the women of the Fourth Period : Thaisa and Marina, separated from Pericles, patient in adversity, are reunited at last and find happiness. Miranda, unaffected, unsophisticated, untainted by one ungenerous thought or impulse, tender, pitiful, open-hearted, so different from the Stratford-type women of Period I, the lively, pert and competent London-type women of Period II, the fate-stricken women of Period III, nurtured in the love and wisdom of a noble father, is at last rewarded with the love of a noble prince. Imogen belied, wronged by her husband, is at last reconciled, and forgives all who have done her harm. Harmione disgraced and thought to be dead, suffers in silence and finally forgives the husband who has so injured her. Perdita, the fair shepherdess, fragrant with the breath of the open fields and wild flowers, lost to her kin, is found again and takes part in the joyful reunion.

Secondly, these Fourth Period plays take us back to the joys of the simple life of nature. They paint Shakespeare's Stratford life—the wild flowers of the countryside, the junketing of the rustics, the merry roguish pedlar with his fardels for the maidens, the shepherds, the sheep-shearing. And as the country scenes point to Shakespeare's renewed life at Stratford, so the scenes of reconciliation between husband and wife, the love of fathers for their daughters, and their watchful care over their children's destiny, point to his renewed life with his wife Anne, and his care of his two daughters—all that then remained alive of his children.

In the Fourth Period, Shakespeare returns to his original method of construction. Instead of concentrating the action on two or three main characters, as he did in his tragedies, he intermingles themes as in the First Period, but paints them on a broader canvas still keeping character in the forefront. In many things Shakespeare seems to return to Period I—in pictures of country life, in the portraiture of girls in themes like the sleeping portion ; but here the handling of materials is finer, characterization is deeper, charity and forgiveness are everywhere—we seem almost to be in a new heaven and a new earth.

In metrical matters, the double endings increase to 38·8 percent from the 22·08 percent of Period III ; the light and weak endings increase to 5·06 percent from the 1·43 percent of Period III ; but the ratio of rhyme to blank verse decreases to 1 : 53·8 from the 1 : 25·8 of Period III.

Shakespeare's Self-Revelation

Shakespeare is a dramatist and a dramatist does not lay bare his soul in his plays. The idea of getting at the soul of Shakespeare through his plays will be resented by many critics. The drama is an "objective" art ; the less said about the dramatist's self-revelation, the better. As a matter of fact the dramatist conceals his self behind his characters—and particularly in the case of Shakespeare who has created such a bewildering variety of characters, no two being alike, his personality, if he has reflected it in any of his characters, is absolutely elusive. Yet lately Professor J. Dover Wilson claims to have discovered the "Essential Shakespeare" in his interesting study of the problem. His book is the high water-mark of the "subjective" interpretation of Shakespeare. We need not go the whole hog with Professor Wilson, but we may accept the reasoned conclusions of Leslie Stephen. And here is Leslie Stephen's summing up of the case :

"A dramatist is no more able than anybody else to bestow upon his characters talents which he does not himself possess. If—as critics are agreed—Shakespeare's characters show humour, Shakespeare must have sense of humour himself. When Mercutio indulges in the wonderful tirade upon Queen Mab, or Jaques moralizes in the forest, we learn that their creator had certain power of mind just as clearly as if we were reading a report of one of the wit combats at the "Mermaid."

It is harder to define those qualities precisely than to say what is implied by John's talk at the "Mitre," but the idiosyncrasy is at least as strongly impressed upon such characteristic mental displays. If we were to ask any critic whether such passages could be attributed to Marlowe or Ben Jonson, he would enquire whether we took him for a fool. If we were considering a bit of purely scientific exposition, the inference to character would not exist. A mathematician, I suppose, could tell me that the demonstration of some astronomical theorem was in Newton's manner, and the remark would not show whether Newton was amiable or spiteful, jealous or generous. But a man's humour and fancy are functions of his character as well as of his reason. To appreciate clearly is to know how he feels as well as how he argues : what are the aspects of life which especially impress him, and what morals are most congenial. I do not see how the critic can claim an instinctive perception of the Shakespearian mode of thought without a perception of some sides of his character. You distinguish Shakespeare's work from his rival's as confidently as any expert judging of handwriting. You admit, too, that you can give a very fair account of the characteristics of the other writers. Then surely you can tell me—or at least you know "implicitly"—what is the quality in which they are defective and Shakespeare pre-eminent.

"Half my knowledge of a friend's character is derived from his talk, and not the less if it is playful, ironical and dramatic. When we agree that Shakespeare's mind was vivid and subtle, that he shows a unique power of blending the tragic and the comic, we already have some indications of character ; and incidentally we catch revelations of more specific peculiarities. Part of my late reading was a charming book in which Mr. Justice Madden sets forth Shakespeare's accurate knowledge of field sports. It seems to prove conclusively a proposition against which there can certainly be no presumption. We may be quite confident that he could thoroughly enjoy a day's coursing on the Cotswold Hills, and we know by the most undeniable proof that his sense of humour was tickled by the oddities of his fellow-sportsmen, the Shallows and Slenders. It is at least equally clear that he had the keenest enjoyment of charms of the surrounding scenery. He could not have written *Midsummer Night's Dream* or *As You Like It*, if the

poetry of the English greenwood had not entered into his soul. The single phrase about the daffodils—so often quoted for its magical power—is proof enough, if there were no other, of a nature exquisitely sensitive to the beauties of flowers and of spring time. It wants, again no such confirmation at Fuller's familiar anecdote to convince us that Shakespeare could enjoy convivial meetings at taverns, that he could listen to, and probably join in, a catch by Sir Toby Belch or make Lord Southampton laugh as heartily as Prince Hall laughed at the jests of Falstaff. Shakespeare, again, as this suggests, was certainly not a Puritan. That may be inferred by judicious critics from particular phrases or from the relations of Puritans, to players in general. But without such reasoning we may go further and say that the very conception of a Puritan Shakespeare involves a contradiction in terms. He represents, of course in the fullest degree, the type which is just the antithesis of Puritanism ; the large and tolerant acceptance of human nature which was intolerable to the rigid and strait-laced fanatics, whom, nevertheless, we may forgive in consideration of their stern morality. People, indeed, have argued, very fruitlessly, I fancy, as to Shakespeare's religious beliefs. Critics tell us, and I have no doubt truly, that it would be impossible to show conclusively from his works whether he considered himself to be an Anglican or a Catholic. But a man's real religion is not to be defined by the formula he accepts or inferred even from the church to which he belongs. His outward profession is chiefly a matter of accident and circumstance, not of character. We may, I think, be pretty certain that Shakespeare's religion, whatever may have been its external form, included a profound sense of the mystery of the world and of the little lives that are rounded by a sleep : a conviction that we are such stuff as dreams are made of, and a constant sense, such as is impressed in the most powerful sonnets that our present life is an infinitesimal moment in the vast "abyss" of eternity. Shakespeare, we know, read Montaigne; and if, like Montaigne, he accepted the creed in which he was brought up, he would have sympathized in Montaigne's sceptical and humorous view of theological controversialists playing their fantastic tricks of logic before high Heaven. Undoubtedly, he despised a pedant, and the pedantry which displayed itself in the wranglings of

Protestant Papist divines would clearly not have escaped his contempt. Critics, again, have disputed as to Shakespeare's politics ; and the problem is complicated by the desire to show that this politics was as good as his poetry. Sound Liberals are unwilling to admit that he had aristocratic tendencies, because they hold that all aristocrats are wicked and narrow-minded. It is, of course, an anachronism to transplant our problems to those days, and we cannot say what Shakespeare would have thought of modern applications of the principles which he accepted. But I do not see how any man could have been more clearly what may be called an intellectual aristocrat. His contempt for the mob may be good-humoured enough, but is surely unequivocal : from the portrait of Jack Cade, promising like a good Socialist, that the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops, to the first, second and third citizens who give a display of their insanity and instability in *Coriolanus* or *Julius Caesar*. Shakespeare may be speaking dramatically through Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida* ; but at least he must have fully appreciated the argument for order : and understood by order that the cultivated and intelligent should rule and the common herd have as little direct voice in state affairs as Elizabeth and James could have desired.

"When we have got so far, we have already, as it seems to me, admitted certain attributes, which are as much personal as literary. If you admit that Shakespeare was a humorist, intensively sensitive to natural beauty, a scorner of the pedantry, whether of scholars or theologians, endowed with an amazingly wide and tolerant view of human nature, radically opposed to Puritanism or any kind of fanaticism, and capable of hearty sympathy with the popular instincts and yet with a strong persuasion of the depth of popular folly, you inevitably affirm at least some negative propositions about the man himself. You can say with confidence what are the characteristics which were thoroughly antipathetic to him, even though it may be difficult to describe accurately the characteristics which he positively embodied.

"Another point is, it would seem, too plain to need much emphasis. The author of *Romeo and Juliet* was, I suppose, capable of Romeo's passion. We may doubt that 'the sun is fire,' but can hardly doubt that Shakespeare could love. In this case, it seems to me, the power of intuition is identical

with the emotional power. A man could surely have been unable to find the most memorable utterance in literature of passions of which he was not himself abnormally susceptible. It may be right to describe a poet's power as marvellous, but why should we hold it to be miraculous ? I agree with Pope's common-sense remarks about Heloisa's 'well-sung woes', 'he best can paint 'em who can feel 'em most'. Surely that is the obvious explanation, and I am unable to see why there should be any difficulty in receiving it."

Shakespeare's Genius—As a Poet and Dramatist

1. *Universality*

"And such was Shakespeare, whose strong soul could climb
Steps of sheer terror, sound the ocean grand
Of passions deep, or over Fancy's strand
Trip with his fairies, keeping step and time.
His too the power to laugh out full and clear
With unembittered joyance, and to move
Along the silent, shadowy paths of love
As tenderly as Dante, whose austere
Stern spirit through the worlds below, above,
Unsmiling strode, to tell the tidings here." —*W. W. Story.*

"Shakespeare's work alone can be said to possess the organic strength and infinite variety, the throbbing fulness, vital complexity and breathing truth of Nature herself. In points of artistic resource and technical ability—such as copious and expressive diction, freshness and pregnancy of verbal combination, richly modulated verse, and structural skill in the handling of incident and action—Shakespeare's supremacy is indeed sufficiently assured. But, after all, it is of course in the spirit and substance of his work, his power of piercing to the hidden centres of character of touching the deepest springs of impulse and passion, out of which are the issues of life and of evolving those issues dramatically with a flawless strength, subtlety and truth, which raises him so immersely above and beyond not only the best of the playwrights who went before him, but the whole line of illustrious dramatists that came after him. It is Shakespeare's unique distinction that he has an absolute command over all the complexities of thought and feeling that prompt to action and bring out the dividing lines of character. He sweeps with the

hand of a master the whole gamut of human experience, from the lowest note to the very top of its compass, from the sportive childish treble of Mamillus, and the pleading boyish tones of Prince Arthur, up to the spectre-haunted terrors of Macbeth, the tropical passion of Othello, the agonised sense and tortured spirit of Hamlet, the sustained elemental grandeur, the Titanic force, the utterly tragical pathos of King Lear." —*T. S. Baynes.*

"The greatest genius that, perhaps, human nature has yet produced, our *myriad-minded* Shakespeare." —*S. T. Coleridge.*

"No other author had ever so copious, so bold, so *creative* an imagination, with so perfect a knowledge of the passions, the humours and sentiments of mankind. He painted all characters, from kings down to peasants, with equal truth and equal force. If human nature were detsroyed, and no monument were left of it except his works, other beings might know *what man was* from those writings." —*George, Lord Lyttleton.*

"When Learning's triumph o'er her barb'rous foes,
First, rear'd the stage, immortal Shakespeare rose ;
Each change of many-coloured life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new." —*Garrick.*

Shakespeare is, above all writers, the poet of Nature, the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of man and his environment, manners and life. His characters do not belong to this country or that, one profession or the other, but come from all lands and all walks of life. They are the rightful progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply and observation will always find, unaffected alike by the vagaries of fashion, the accidents of custom and the changes of opinion. They run the whole gamut of the world, the flesh and the devil, motivated by general passions and principles and conforming to the common pattern of life. Shakespeare's persons are not individuals : they are a species eternal and true taken from nowhere in particular, though met here, there and everywhere.

And yet paradoxically enough no two characters of Shakespeare are alike. Shakespeare never repeats himself. Indeed universality of idea and individuality of character are his specialities. With all the versality of a dramatic Proteus he changes himself into every character and enters into every condition of human nature. Myriad are the shapes and

guises, but like the colours in a kaleidoscope, all so bright and clear, all so true to life, that in the words of Pope it is a sort of injury to call Shakespeare's characters by so distant a name as copies of Nature. Or, as Goethe would have it, "his characters are like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal ; they show you the hour like others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible."

It was not for nothing that Shakespeare's last hero was a master-magician, a universal charmer. Prospero is a significant symbol ; but all its significance it does not explain enough. Rather, like Wordsworth's beautiful violet, half-seen, half-hidden, it only beautifully tantalises. For magic, however transfiguring from the simple Margo trick to the stupendous Rope trick is, after all, only a trick eerie and esoteric true, but a trick all the same. Shakespearian magic, on the other hand, lies open and aboveboard in his plays and poetry for one with the eye, the ear and the wit to understand. And for a second, all magic dies with the magician. A posthumous thaumaturgist is neither seen nor heard of. Yet Shakespeare's magic was not made much of in his life-time. He had caused a flutter in the dovecots of dramatists and poets, he had made them sit up and take notice ; but when all is said, he was one among the many, a tall poppy with whom others, even the tallest of the tall, had to reckon but by no means surely a Triton among the minnows. His magic worked later, distance lent enchantment to the view and continues still to lend it. Already Shakespearian has grown from a snowball into an avalanche and Shakespearianism has become a regular religion.

Well, where vagueness is bliss it is folly to be clear. What he was, the greatest thinkers, critics and poets could not fathom. Goethe called him second only to a god, Coleridge termed him million-mouthed. Wordsworth compared him to a mountain, and they all left it at that. Perhaps an Aristotle alone could place Shakespeare in a clear-cut category and Aristotle flourished once in remote antiquity and is not going to flourish again. None the less gods and groundlings alike, or as bottom would say, every mother's son of us, could enjoy the magic. Here is matter for all tastes, all prejudices, all predilections. Here is knowledge without tears, pleasure without sin, upliftment without penance.

Nor need you be taken aback at this funny farago of

panem et circenses, church juxtaposed with cinema screen and religion brought to the Rialto. If you call it Gilbertain, well, then so is life, at once topsyturvy and humorous. For what is life but a musical miscellany of pleasure and pain, high seriousness and hilarious laughter. And to this Shakespeare spoke with a voice deep as a prophet and high as heaven. In this Shakespeare was a prophet. A peculiar prophet though, in that the man sang and did not preach except through music. More while he set out the riddle of life and gave all the necessary clues, he did not care to solve it but left his Pericles, prince of Tyre, as standing warning against daring Oedipuses. Enough that life has a harmony as the Spheres have theirs : this for angels, that for mortals. Life is a gigantic promenade concert with the whole world for its audience. They that stand still or go out of their way seeking the Primum Mobile, do so at their peril. This is what Shakespeare has sung and spoken through a megaphone as it were in his works with none of your Dantean defeatism but with right apostolic fervour.

Hence it is that Shakespeare's gayest comedies are interspersed with scenes and interludes of solemn seriousness and civil-suited melancholy and his tragedies of the deepest pathos are chock-a-block with passages and part singings of scintillating wit and side-splitting laughter. Hence that too crown comic character of all times, that mountain of flesh exuding wit at every pore, that brazen-browed, Toledo-tongued Sir John Falstaff of Munchausenesque medacity and Shavian cynicism. Indian Bidushak and Birbal in one, rolls his way through tragedies and comedies on end illustrating as if in person that life is one chiaroscuro of alternating light and shade, one fabric of which joy and sorrow are the warp and the woof.

Even a prophet was without honour in his land. Not so Shakespeare.

His writings were confessed to be such
As neither Man, nor Muse, can praise too much ;

and this was "all men's sufferage.' He broke unities and usage, Priscian's head and princely genealogies and was the more applauded for that. "Better a mechanic rule were stretched or broken than a great beauty were omitted," said Dryden. "There is more beauty", said Addison, "in the words of a great genius who is ignorant of the rules of art, than in those of a little genius who knows and observes them."

Ignorant of the rules perhaps but by no means an ignoramus. For, though without a particular piece of Oxon parchment in his portfolio, he had yet won many a richer distinction in the University of Genius which had turned out Homer and Chaucer before and was later to turn out Balzac and Dickens, *viz.*, the public street and the tavern where you read no books, the mighty bloodless substitute for life as Stevenson called them, but the 'liveableness of life' in all the colours of the rainbow. Not that he did not know art, but that he knew it so well that he could conceal it, too. 'He was master of an art which no one else could reach,' said Ben Jonson who was an artist if ever there was one. And that Sultan of Literature, Dr. Johnson, who has debunked many a fair reputation nobly won, wrote, 'He who has mazed his imagination in following the phantoms which other writers raise up before him, may here be cured of his delirious ecstasies, by reading human sentiments in human language ; by scenes from which a hermit may estimate the transactions of the world and a confessor predict the progress of the world.' More trenchant still is Lyttleton who in his '*Dialogues of the Dead*' said that Shakespeare's knowledge of the passions, the humours and the sentiments of mankind was so perfect and so perfectly expressed that if human nature were destroyed and no monument were left of it except his works, other beings might know what man was from those writings. Such was thrice-sweet Shakespeare, 'honey-tongued' and 'mellifluous' of speech, saccharine of diction and of luscious imagination, all compact.

The world is prolific of authors and prolific authors are the order of the day. There are authors that amuse, authors that instruct, and authors that elevate, to say nothing of 'shilling shockers' and penny a-liners beyond the pale. But authors who at once amuse, instruct and elevate are the salt of the earth. No wonder they are so rare, and, like all rare things of utility, they are precious as well. Free trade or economic nationalism, they have an international value and currency of their own. Quotas, pacts and restrictions bind them not : they are heart-deep. For them, there exist neither snobbish segregations of class nor chauvinistic quarantines of country : they are cosmopolitans honoured with the freedom of every city of civilization. They go strong while they live : and when they have shuffled off their mortal coil, they go

stronger like Caesar's spirit. To this privileged band belongs William Shakespeare. He has been more than three centuries dead. But he was an Elizabethan—the age of vim, valour and wine, the 'water of life.' The older the wine, the better the bouquet, they say. What about Shakespeare, then, the wine of life incarnate, whose bouquet persists still, dainty and delicious as ever ? A super-Voronoff for the mind and the spirit with hormones and hemoglobins all complete. Or a new version of Peter Pan, ever young himself and making others young too. A modern poet has written :

Revolving years have flitted on,
Corroding Time has done its worst,
Pilgrim and worshipper have gone
From Avon's shrine to shrines of dust ;
But Shakespeare lives unrivall'd still
And unapproached by mortal mind:
The giant of Parnassus' hill,
The pride, the monarch of mankind.

Great praise this ! Yet, not enough. For though he bestrides the narrow world like a clossus, neither the men who walk under his huge legs are all petty, nor do his admirers whose name is legion peep about to find themselves dishonourable graves. Ben Jonson and Milton, Carlyle and Quincey, Goethe and Schiller, were giants themselves, but they acknowledged and acclaimed him their 'Big Brother.' And far from finding themselves dishonourable graves they lived and learned, poured libations and burnt incense at his shrine and were inspired to works of immortality. Though monarch of mankind, this is no ordinary monarchy. For, while thrones may totter to the dust, crowns tumble in the mire, and kings wander jobless—the War aftermath has sent many perambulating the capitals of Europe—Shakespeare on his pedestal in the valhalla of Literature will stand firm and foursquare, swaying generation after generation of scholars and savants, critics and connoisseurs, hermits and hero-worshippers alike." —*D. S. Varshney.*

2. *Dramatic Faculty*

"Many dramatic writers of different ages are capable, occasionally, of breaking out, with great fervour of genius, in the natural language of strong emotion. No writer of antiquity

is more distinguished for abilities of this kind than Euripides. His whole heart and soul seem torn and agitated by the force of the passion he imitates. He ceases to be Euripides ; he is Medea ; he is Orestes. Shakespeare, however, is most eminently distinguished, not only by the occasional sallies but by imitating the passion in all its aspects, by pursuing it through all its windings and labyrinths, by moderating or accelerating its impetuosity according to the influence of other principles and of external events, and finally by combining it in a judicious manner with other passions and propensities, or by setting it aptly in opposition. He thus unites the two essential powers of dramatic invention, that of forming characters and that of imitating in their natural expressions, the passions and affections of which they are composed." —*W. Richardson.*

3. *Nature versus Art*

"He was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *Poeta non fit sed nascitur* ; one is not *made*, but *born* a poet. Indeed, his learning was very little, so that, as Cornish diamonds are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smoothed even as they are taken out of the earth, so nature itself was all the *art* which was used upon him.

Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson ; which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man of war ; Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning ; solid but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man of war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention." —*Thomas Fuller.*

"If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakespeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of Nature ; it proceeded through Egyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakespeare was inspiration indeed ; he is not so much an imitator as an instrument of Nature : and it is not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him." —*Alexander Pope.*

"Shakespeare came out of Nature's hand like Pallas out of Jove's head, at full growth and mature." —*George Colman.*

4. *Truth and Variety of Character*

"His *characters* are so much Nature herself, that 'tis a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shows that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image ; each picture, like a mock rainbow, is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakespeare is as much an individual as those in life itself ; it is as impossible to find any two alike ; as much as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will upon comparison be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character we must add the wonderful preservation of it, which is such throughout his plays, that, had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker." —*Alexander Pope.*

"His plays alone are properly expressions of the passions, not descriptions of them. His characters are real beings of flesh and blood ; they speak like men, not like authors."

—*William Hazlitt.*

5. *Powers of Insight and Imagination*

"Shakespeare is as astonishing for the exuberance of his genius in abstract notions and for the depth of his analytic and philosophic insight, as for the scope and minuteness of his poetic imagination. It is as if into a mind poetical in *form* there had been poured all the *matter* that existed in the mind of his contemporary Bacon. In Shakespeare's plays we have thought, history, exposition, philosophy, all within the round of the poet." —*David Masson.*

"Through all the forenoon of our triumphant day till the utter consummation and ultimate ascension of dramatic poetry incarnate and transfigured in the master-singer of the world, the quality of his tragedy was as that of Marlowe's broad, single and intense ; large of hand, voluble tongue, direct of purpose. With the dawn of its latter epoch a new power comes the quality of his tragedy was as that of Marlowe's broad, single and intense ; large of hand, voluble of tongue, direct of purpose. With the dawn of its latter epoch a new power comes upon it, to find clothing and expression in new forms of speech and after a new style. The language has put off its foreign decorations of lyric and elegiac ornament ; it has found already

its infinite gain in the loss of those sweet superfluous graces which encumbered the march and enchained the utterance of its childhood. The figures which it invests are now no more types of a single passion, the incarnations of a single thought. They now demand a scrutiny which tests the power of a mind and tries the value of a judgment ; they appeal to something more than the instant apprehension which sufficed to respond to the immediate claim of those that went before them. Romeo and Juliet were simply lovers, and their names bring back to us no further thought than of their love and the lovely sorrow of its end ; Antony and Cleopatra shall be before all things lovers, but the thought of their love and its triumphant tragedy shall recall other things beyond number—all the forces and fortunes of mankind, all the consequences that waited on their imperial passion, the infinitive variety of qualities and powers wrought together and welded into the frame and composition of that love which shook from end to end all nations and kingdoms of the earth. *—A. C. Swinburne.*

6. *Humanity*

"What I admire in Shakespeare, however, is that his loves are all human—no earthliness hiding itself from itself in sentimental transcendentalism—no loves of the angels, which are least angelic things, I believed, that float in the clouds, though they do look down upon mortal feelings with contempt just as the dark volumes of smoke which issue from the long chimney of a manufactory might brood very sublimely over the town which they blacken, and fancy themselves far more ethereal than those vapours which steam up from the earth by day and night. Yet these are pure water, and those are destined to condense in black soot. So are the transcendentalisms of affection. Shakespeare is healthy, true to Humanity in this.. You always know, that you are on an earth which has to be refined, instead of floating in the empyrean with wings of wax. Therein he is immeasurably greater than Shelley. Shelleyism is very sublime, sublimer a good deal than a god, for a god's word is all wrong and Shelley is all right—much purer than Christ, for Shelley can criticise Christ's heart and life—nevertheless Shelleyism is only atmospheric profligacy, to coin a Montgomeryism. I believe this to be one of Shakespeare's most wondrous qualities—the humanity of his nature and heart. There is a spirit of sunny endeavour about him,

and an acquiescence in things as they are—not incompatible with a cheerful resolve to make them better." —*F. W. Robertson.*

7. *Magic of Expression*

"Let me have the pleasure of quoting a sentence about Shakespeare, which I met with by accident not long ago in the *Correspondent*, a French Review which not a dozen English people, I suppose, look at. The writer is praising Shakespeare's prose. 'With Shakespeare's,' he says, 'prose comes in whenever the subject, being more familiar, is unsuited to the majestic English iambic.' And he goes on : 'Shakespeare is the king of poetic rhythm and style, as well as the king of the realm of thought, along with his dazzling prose. Shakespeare has succeeded in giving us the most varied, the most harmonious verse which has ever sounded upon the human ear since the verse of the Greeks.' M. Henry Cochin, the writer of this sentence, deserves our gratitude for it; it would not be easy to praise Shakespeare, in a single sentence, more justly."—*M. Arnold.*

8. *Humour*

"Shakespeare illustrates every phase and variety of humour : a complete analysis of Shakespeare's humour would make a system of psychology."

Elizabethan Stage

Originally a scaffold was set up either in the churchyard, or market place for the performance of a religious play, but for a secular play the inn-yard was chosen. The inn-yard resembled the quad of a small college or alms-house—it was surrounded by rooms, and had an open gallery running round it, on which were the doors of the chambers on the upper floor.

This was practically the model of the theatre that Burbage built on the site of the dissolved priory of Holywell in Shoreditch in London in 1576. He, however, made the yard a circular one, like the bear-baiting and bull-baiting rings already existing on the other side of the Thames in Southwark, This led Shakespeare to speak of his theatre 'as this wooden O.' Before the end of the century several more play-houses on more or less the same model sprang up. In 1598, Richard and Cuthbert, sons of Burbage, built the famous Globe in which most of Shakespeare's plays were performed.

From existing facsimiles and many scattered references of the time we can fairly reconstruct the Elizabethan stage. The

circular yard, which corresponds to 'the pit,' was open to the sky, surrounded by three tiers of galleries, and having an oblong stage raised upon trestles projecting from one side almost into the middle of the area. The players were thus surrounded by spectators. The highly priced seats were in the gallery behind the stage in a private box, called "the lords' room." The uppermost gallery was roofed with thatch or tiles, and the stage was partly covered with provision to carry off the rain.

The stage was sometimes a movable platform, as we have said above. At the back of the stage was a screen in which were two doorways, opening out of the actors' retiring room; between them—was a third door hidden by a curtain, which formed the background of the stage. The expression 'behind the arras' (where Polonius, *e.g.*, in *Hamlet* lay in hiding) points to this curtain at the back of the stage. Behind the curtain was a recess, which could be used as an inner scene to represent, *e.g.*, the tomb of Juliet, or the bed-chamber of Desdemona. It was immediately below the upper stage. The upper stage was used to represent the battlements of a castle wall, the upper storey of a house, the balcony of Juliet's bedroom, or any scene described as above in stage directions.

The arras of the background could be used to indicate scenery by means of crude pictures painted on cloth. At any rate what little scenery was used was of a very primitive kind. M. Jusserand points out that Shakespeare made up for the 'deficiency of the scenery by his wonderful descriptions of landscapes, castles, and wild moors.' If Shakespeare had painted scenery at his command, we would have lost much of his fine descriptive poetry. Theatrical property was, however, liberally put into requisition, as we learn from the account books of the Elizabethan times. The allusions in Ben Jonson's Prologue to *Every Man in His Humour* are significant—for he says he would have no

> "roll'd bullet heard,
> To say it thunders ; nor tempestuous drum
> Rumbles, to tell you when the storm doth come."

Large sums of money were spent on the costumes of the players. But the costume was Elizabethan, there being no idea to reproduce the costume of the period in which the play

was set. "Shakespeare was no archaeologist; as the mediaeval artist who gave us the wall paintings and sculpture of our churches represented Pilate's Roman soldiers in plate armour, so his Romans, in *Coriolanus*, for example, carry pistols, are put in the stocks, say grace before meat and generally behave and look like the Elizabethans who watched them perform."

All the female parts were played by men and boys in women's dress. On this point the lines, spoken by Portia (*Merchant of Venice*, III, iv. 62-68) make an oblique comment:

"I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutered like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace ;
And speak, between the change of man and boy
With a reed voice, and turn two mincing steps,
Into a manly stride."

It seems incredible that boys with 'cracked' voice could do justice to such parts as those of Lady Macbeth, Volumnia. Cleopatra at any rate seems to lament before her death that 'some *squeaking* Cleopatra' will 'boy' her greatness.

INTRODUCTION

TO

KING LEAR

"Of all Shakespeare's plays, 'Macbeth' is the most rapid, 'Hamlet' the slowest in movement. 'Lear' combines length with rapidity—like the hurricane and the whirlpool, absorbing while it advances. It begins as a stormy day in summer, with brightness; but that brightness is lurid, and anticipates the tempest."

—*Coleridge.*

" 'King Lear' has again and again been described as Shakespeare's greatest work, the best of his plays, the tragedy in which he exhibits most fully his multitudinous powers; and if we were doomed to lose all his dramas except one, probably the majority of those who know and appreciate him best, would pronounce for keeping 'King Lear'.

—*Bradley.*

DATES OF THE COMPOSITION AND PUBLICATION OF KING LEAR

"King Lear" was entered on the Register of the Stationers' Company on 26th November, 1607, and published in 1608. It was, perhaps, written either late in 1605, or early in 1606 by Shakespeare. Speculations regarding the period of time, whereby Shakespeare should have been occupied, are natural, nonetheless futile. The date of composition can be ascertained on the basis of the limits, fixed by external and internal evidences, which are as follows :—

(*i*) **External Evidence.** From the evidence of the title-page of Quarto I, and of the Stationers' Register, it is clear that the play was performed on 26th December, 1606. The title page runs thus :—

"M. William Shakespeare : / His / True Chronicle Historie of the life and/death of King Lear and his three/Daughters. With the unfortunate life of Edgar, sonne/and heirse to the Earle of Gloster, and his/sullen and assumed humor of Tom of Bedlam : / As it was played before the Kings Majestie at Whitehall upon / S. Stephans night in Christmas Holidayes / By his Majesties servants playing usually at the Gloabe / on the Bancke-side / London /."

Although this Quarto was dated 1608, we know that the court performance was in 1606 and not 1607. Our most certain evidence of putting the downward limit of the date of the play is the entry on the Stationers' Register on 26th November, 1607, which runs as follows :—

"Na. Butter. Io. Busby. Entered for their Copie vnder thandes of Sir Geo. Buck Knight and Thwardens A booke called: Mr. William Shakespeare his historye of Kynge Lear as yt was played before the kings majestie at Whitehall vppon St. Stephans night at Christmas last by his Majesties servantes playing usually at the globe on the Banksyde Vjd."

(*ii*) **Internal Evidence.** Samuel Harsnett's "Declaration of Eg regious Popish Impostures" was entered in the Stationers'

Register on 16th March, 1603. Shakespeare made use of this book throughout the play. Consequently, we can be certain that the play could not have been written earlier than March, 1603. Besides the following important points in regard to internal evidence, may be stated—

(*a*) There are marked references about "these late eclipses", and "the prediction," as to their "Sequent effects", in Act I, Scene ii. It is quite probable that Gloucester, in his speech refers to the total eclipse of the Sun in October, 1605, which was preceded by a partial eclipse of the Moon in September. Did Shakespeare refer to the eclipses of the Sun and the Moon which occurred in 1598 as well as in 1601 ? We may counter this by asking, why in that case should Shakespeare make Gloucester speak of the late eclipses?

(*b*) It is supposed that Gloucester's words (in the same speech) "machination, hollowness, treachery" etc., refer to the Gunpowder Plot of the 5th November, 1605.

(*c*) In Act III, Scene iv, 185 we find Edgar repeating the old metrical iine, "I smell the blood of British man", the original of which is quoted in one of Nashe's pamphlets (1595)—"I smell the blood of an English man." One would ask why did Shakespeare change 'English' to 'British' ? The dramatist probably had in his mind the Royal proclamation of May 1603, whereby the King declared that he held "The two kingdoms as presently united as one kingdom."

The Evidence of Style, Metrical Features and Tone. The date 1605 or 1606 is suitable, as indicated by the style, verse-craft and tone of the play.

Style. The perfect harmony between thought and expression, which marks Shakespeare's middle period (of which 'Julius Caesar' is the characteristic play), is not seen in "King Lear". Here thought and harmony outrun language, but not to the extent they do in his last period.

Metrical Features. The large quantity of run-on verse, double or feminine endings, short lines and prose, indicates a comparatively later period, though not the last one in which light and weak endings prevail. On the basis of Metrical tests, Bradley established that "Lear" must have preceded "Macbeth". But Sir E. K. Chambers contends that the statistics worked out on historical test, are no sure guide to

"the sequence of contiguous plays, especially when the text of one of them, like that of 'Macbeth', may only be before us in a much abridged form."

Tone. The tone of the play is that of the third period (between 1601 and 1608). In Shakespeare's dramatic career, this was the period of gloom, his mind being marked by the problem of evil and by the awful spectacle of the guilty and the guiltless, involved in a common doom, and of Nemesis following as relentlessly upon error as upon crime.

TEXT

The text of "King Lear" in modern edition is based on a meticulous collation, by scholars, of the two Quartos that appeared in 1623 and 1632. Thus the modern text is essentially eleatic. Verity holds—

"There are a (comparatively) few places, where the Quartos are undoubtedly right, and the Folio wrong and others, where it is a matter of individual opinion, which text gives the better reading."

"King Lear" was first printed in 1608, the imprint of the First Quarto (often known as Pied Bull Quarto) being—

"London, /Printed for Nathaniel Butter and to be sold at his shop in Pauls/Churchyard at the signe of the Pide Bull neere/St. Austins Gate. 1608."

The great discrepancy between the respective versions of the play in the Quartos and the Folio is that the Quartos contain about 220 lines as according to Furvers's calculation), which are wanting in the Folio, and on the other hand lack about 50 lines, which are contained in the Folio. It has become more or less customary to give the extra lines of both the Quartos and the Folio.

We cannot help suspecting the popularity of Lear, as only two Quarto editions appeared before it was reprinted in Folio. It may, however, be remembered that other of Shakespeare's most perfect efforts, such as "Macbeth", were not published at all, until they were collected in the Folio. It can also be assumed that the play was extremely popular, because it required more than one edition in one year to satisfy the public demand.

Another important point at issue is whether the Folio represents Shakespeare's own revision of text given in Quartos.

Some critics hold that Shakespeare excised the passages that are wanting in the Folio ; others are of the opinion that omissions were made by the actors after Shakespeare's retirement of Stratford or his death. In fact, the Folio gives us substantially the abridged acting edition of "Lear."

Sometimes the omission has been dictated by the consideration of stage effect, such as in Act III, sc. vii, 98-106 and Act IV, sc. vii, 85-97. Each of these passages adds a touch of naturalness and is effective in its own way, but that way is not the stage way and hence the omission, in view of the striking effect at the close of a scene. Delius maintains—"In the Quartos, we have the play, as it was originally performed before King James, and before the audience of the Globe, but sadly marred by misprints, printers' sophistications and omissions, perhaps due to an imperfect and illegible MS. In the Folio, we have a later MS. belonging to the theatre, and more nearly identical with what Shakespeare wrote. The omissions of the Quartos are the blunders of the printers ; the omissions of the Folios are the abridgements of the Acts."

THE SOURCES OF THE PLAY

"In fine, wherever Shakespeare works on old materials, you will find him not wiping dusted gold, but extracting gold from dust, where none but himself could have made the golden extraction." —*Campbell.*

We find the successful blending of the two stories in the play. In one King Lear is the central figure, while the other deals with the Earl of Gloucester. The origin of the story of Lear and his three daughters is legendary and shrouded in the 'traditional mists of antiquity.' Some scholars consider the story to be a nature myth. Gollancz, in his commentary on the tempestuous character of the play, has referred to the view of some celtic folk-lorist, who consider "Lir" (*i.e.* Lear) symbolizing Neptune, Goneril and Regan representing rough winds and Cordelia, the Zephyr. Shakespeare seems to have unconsciously divined the germ of the myth. Like many immortal folk-tales, the story is concerned with more than one monarch and exhibits a variety of homes and localities. The story of Lear goes back to the twelfth century and during the Middle Ages, it should have remained one of the most popular as well as charming stories.

The oldest extant version can be found in Geoffrey of Monmouth's Latin "Historia Britonum", compiled about 1130. Layman's "Brut" contains the story in the verse form. The story in prose is found in Fabyan's "Chronicle", in Holinshed's "Historie of England" in the Gesta Romanorum (considered to be the mediaeval thesaurus of anecdotes) and in Camden's "Remains."

The following works should be considered quite significant in regard to the sources of the play :—

(*i*) **Holinshed's Chronicles**. Holinshed's "Historie" was the chief source of Shakespeare's historical plays. One need not be sceptical about that Shakespeare should have read and made use of "The Story of Leir", as told by Holinshed (The Second Booke of the Historie of England, Chapters V and VI, ed. 1754).

(*ii*) **The old play. "King Leir and His Three Daughters."** That Shakespeare was familiar with the old play (supposed to be performed at the Rose Theatre early in April, 1594, and printed later in 1605 by Simon), cannot be denied. The author of the play is unknown. H. Dugdale Sykes, however, makes a case for Peel's authorship. This old play has some pretty scenes, along with a quaint pathos. Perillus, a courtier and a faithful companion of Lear may well be regarded as the prototype of Kent. A messenger, very much like Oswald, passes between the sisters with letter and in one scene, "Goneril" intercepts him and asks to see the letter, which he is bearing from her husband, whose intentions she doubts.

The King's abdication is complete in the old play, as well as in Shakespeare's tragedy, but in Holinshed's chronicles, Lear retains a portion of the realm, of which he is ejected by his sons-in-law. "Goneril" complains (as in Act I, Sc. iii) of Lear's constant fault-finding. In the scene of reconciliation Lear is found kneelling to Cordelia, the latter bidding him to rise. Campbell has drawn a beautiful comparison—

"The two Lears have nothing in common but their aged weakness, their general goodness of heart, their royal rank and their misfortunes. The ante-Shakespearean Lear is a patient, simple old man, who bears his sorrows very meekly till Cordelia arrives with her husband, the King of France, and his victorious army, and restores her father to the throne

of Britain. In the old play, Leir has a friend Perillus, who moves an interest, though not so deeply as Kent in the latter and dreader drama."

On the whole Shakespeare sublimated the old play into a new tragedy by an entire originality in the spiritual portraiture of the personages.

(*iii*) **Spenser's "Faerie Queene", 1590 ; Book II, Canto X, Stanzas 27-32.** Shakespeare should have carefully read the story, as given in "The Faerie Queene", which left its influence on him in three ways—

(*a*) According to Spenser's account, Lear had already divided his kingdom and as such, the prescription of love test was merely meant to satisfy his ears with their loving and hypocritical speeches. The opening scene of Shakespeare follows Spenser in this regard.

(*b*) For the sweet name "Cordelia," the playwright owes to Spenser. In Holinshed, she is called "Cordellia"; in the old play, "Cordeilla", and "The Mirror for Magistrates" gives "Cordell". "Cordelia" is not found in any version prior to "King Lear", except in Spenser's.

(*c*) In making Goneril wed not Cornwall, as in Holinshed, but Albany (corresponding to Spenser's "King of Scotts"), Shakespeare also follows the author of the "Faerie Queene."

(*iv*) **"The Mirror for Magistrates" and "Albion's England".** Though they give a bare sketch of the story, which appears in Holinshed, still Shakespeare's familiarity with them cannot be doubted, as these works then were fairly popular.

(*v*) **Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia"—Book II, pp. 133-138, as quoted in the Clarendon ed.** Shakespeare is indebted to "Arcadia" in regard to the story of the under-plot. "The narrative of Paphlagonian unkinde king and his kinde sonne" is the source of Gloucester story. In "Arcadia", the bastard leads the King to hate his legitimate son. The King, drunk in his affection for that unlawful and unnatural son, suffers many tortures and eventually is deprived, both of his kingdom and eyesight, thus left to wander through the wastes. The legitimate son, having served with honours as a soldier in a neighbouring country, returns, before it is too late, and

prevents his helpless and blind father from committing suicide, by casting himself down from a rock.

Shakespeare turns this theme into a harrowing tragedy of Gloucester, his bastard son Edmund, who treacherously hounds out the legitimate son Edgar, followed by the father's loss of eyesight and expulsion into the tempest. The old man takes his deliverance from the projected suicide (by Edgar) by divine powers, followed by repentance and chastening of the spirit and finally his death from the ecstasy of having regained his lost son.

(*vi*) **The Ballad "King Lear and His Three Daughters", as reprinted from "Percy's Reliques".** Bishop Percy regrets that nothing could assist in ascertaining the date of the ballad 'but what little evidence arises from within this, the reader must weigh and judge for himself. Johnson believes the story of the play being derived from this historical ballad. The reason for the play being posterior to the ballad is that the ballad has nothing of Shakespeare's nocturnal tempest, which is too striking to have been omitted. The ballad "has the rudiments of the play, but none of its amplifications."

Where does the success of Shakespeare lie ? In reply to this query Furness maintains that Shakespeare "converted the stocks and stones of the old dramas and chronicles into living, breathing men and women." How much did he draw from this source or that ? No doubt, he drew from Holinshed, or from the old comedy or from other sources, but "where did he find Lear's insanity, or the pudder of the elements or the inspired babblings of the fool ?" Above all other human compositions, his tragedies are "sublime and heaven-high", and this can't be gainsaid.

SHAKESPEARE'S CHANGES & THEIR SIGNIFICANCE

Shakespeare's changes in the story, with the magic touch of his myriad-minded genius, transferred the crude material of the story into gold. He enriched the story with a new atmosphere, a new and sublime tragic power, a profoundly spiritual and moral significance, magnificent range and diversity of tones. Shakespeare's changes can be summarized as follows :—

(*i*) The tragic ending to the play is Shakespeare's peculi-

arity. In all the earliest accounts, King Lear is again enthroned by Cordelia and King of France.

(*ii*) In Shakespeare's tragedy the Fool plays quite a prominent part.

(*iii*) Intertwining the main story with Gloucester episode (as an under-plot), Shakespeare drives the incidents of the play to a tragic conclusion.

(*iv*) Again, it is through Gloucester's attempt to assist the King, that he, as ill luck would have it, loses his eyesight, and it is through this action that the vandalic Cornwall meets his own doom.

(*v*) The real madness of Lear and the feigned madness of Edgar are well contrasted, so as to heighten the intensity of the former.

(*vi*) In the older versions, the parts of Goneril and Regan cease with the victory of Lear, but in Shakespeare's tragedy their adulterous passion for Edmund, deepening their villainy, leads them to be destroyed by each other.

(*vii*) The Duke of Burgundy has been introduced as the rival of the King of France in Shakespeare's play.

(*viii*) The storm scene is introduced by Shakespeare to unlock the gates of pity and terror.

THE DRAMATIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE ALTERATIONS

(*i*) The blending of the two plots create an impression of a "commotion in the moral world". The Gloucester plot makes the tragic end a necessity. The tragic end, as a brilliant stroke of art, produces a spectacle of the ever-widening waves of evil which sweep away the good as well as bad, recklessly and relentlessly engulfing them.

(*ii*) The storm produces an everlasting impression. Cataclysm in the physical world intensifies the cataclysm in the moral world.

(*iii*) Lear's madness with its developing phases, constitutes the hub of the entire play and bears a sound testimony of the profound imaginative insight of Shakespeare. It not only reveals the untold riches of his mind but also a character in development.

(*iv*) The Fool, paradoxically enough, intensifies the pathos

y relieving it. Would the play not be impoverish, but for is rich, elegant and wistful humour ?

(*v*) The amazing power of characterisation helps Shake-peare in vitalizing the shadowy figures of the early stories. n about a hundred lines, Cordelia, because of her brilliant ortrayal by the playwright, haunts our imagination like a eavenly spirit.

(*vi*) Shakespeare's reconciliation scene, by far the most xcellent, will no doubt be deemed as one of the immortal cenes in the realm of dramatic literature.

THE DURATION OF THE ACTION

Eccles, who edited "King Lear" in 1794, was the first to eckon the time consumed during the action of this tragedy. He took the liberty of changing the order of scenes in Act IV o fit the duration of his scheme. P. A. Daniel, however, is omparatively more convincing. He computed the number f days taken up by the drama and published his analysis in The Translation of the New Shakespeare Society" (1877-79). Daniel is of the opinion that the dramatic action in "King ear" takes as many as ten days the analysis of which is as ollows :—

Act	Scenes	Day	Remarks
I	i	1st	
I	ii	2nd	
—	—	—	An interval of something less than a fortnight.
I	iii, iv, and v.	3rd	
II	i and ii	4th	
II III	iii and iv ; i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi	5th	
III IV	vii i	6th	
IV	ii	7th	
—	—	—	Perhaps an interval of a day or two.
IV	iii	8th	
IV	iv, v and vi	9th	
IV V	vii i, ii and iii	10th	

The opening scene occupies one day. The second scene takes the second day. Daniel interprets Gloucester's exclamation—"And the King gone to-night" to mean 'of the night last passed'. Daniel allows Edgar to remain into concealment for about fourteen days. The second day is followed by an interval of something less than a fortnight, Lear's exclamation (Act I, sc. iv. 302-3) being the basis thereof—

"What ! fifty of my followers at a clap,
Within a fortnight."

At about midday, with the third scene the action recommences, and ceasing 'a little afternoon' carries us through the rest of the Act. This makes the third day.

Towards the night of the following day, *i.e.*, the fourth day Act II begins. Edmund has the mock fight with Edgar, and Cornwall and Regan arrive at the castle during the night, and this fact must fix the time of the second scene of 'this day' in which the quarrel between Kent and Oswald takes place. It will, however, be remembered that it was about in 3 days that Kent tripped off Oswald's heels and shortly afterwards Lear sent him on this errand. When, in this scene, he again meets Oswald, he says —

"Is it two days ago, since I tripped up thy heels and beat thee before the King ?" —(Act II, sc. ii. 28-29)

We may suppose that about a day and a half should have been occupied in his journeying to Cornwall's palace and from there to Gloucester's castle and that this is the second night or early morning, since he set out with Lear's letters : midnight of the fourth day or 1 or 2 a.m. of the fifth day.

The fifth day is occupied by the scenes iii and iv of Act II and the first six scenes of Act III. Edmund and Goneril are found on their way back to Albany's palace on the sixth day. Gloucester's eyes being put out, Edgar leads him to Dover. Obviously the events of Act III, sc. vii, and Act IV, sc. i, also fill up the sixth day.

On the seventh day, the action of act IV, sc. ii commences during which Edmund and Goneril accomplish their journey ; Goneril and Albany exchange amenities and the messenger arrives with the tidings of Gloucester's death.

After this an interval of a day or two follows, but Daniel is not pretty sure of it.

Act IV, sc. iii, showing the scene of the French camp near Dover occupies the eighth day. Lear is there but "a sovereign sham" still keeps him from Cordelia. The iv, v and vi scenes are assigned to the ninth day.

Lear crowned with flowers has been met in the fields and Cordelia sets out in search of him. Meanwhile, we receive the tidings of "the British powers, marching hitherward". On this day Gloucester supposed to have leaped from Dover Cliff and Oswald meets his death. The rest of the tragedy happens on the tenth day, which occupy Act IV, sc. vii, and all the scenes of Act V.

Indeed, but for the almost lightning speed of the action, some little interval might have occurred between the ninth and the tenth day.

Daniel says, "The longest period, including intervals that can be allowed for this play is one month ; though perhaps little more than three weeks is sufficient."

THE PROBLEMS OF CONSTRUCTION

The Movement of the Play. Every great tragedy, in itself, is an experiment in dramaturgy. Among Shakespeare's tragedies, "King Lear" alone adds to its main plot a full-fledged under-plot. While it is a great advantage on the imaginative side, it is bound to adversely affect the movement of the play after the main plot reaches its climax. After the all-powerful main plot has reached its peak moment, some relaxing on the part of the audience becomes inevitable. In fact, Shakespeare has proposed here to ride on two horses and why should it be surprising if one lags a little behind than the other? Coleridge observes—

"In the Shakespearean drama, there is a vitality, which grows and evolves itself from within a key-note which guides and controls the harmonies throughout. What is "Lear ?" It is storm and tempest—the thunder at first grumbling in the far horizon, then gathering around us, and at length bursting in fury over our heads—succeeded by a breaking of the clouds for a while, a last flash of lightning, the closing in of night and the single hope of darkness."

That the play "combines length with rapidity", is its great peculiarity. Elizabethan stage, being unlocalized, as it were

the action of the play, being so swift, can be likened to the movement of a shuttle, moving from one plot to the other. The first two scenes constitute together a sort of double dramatic prologue. The opening scene, where Lear divides his kingdom, is a brilliant stroke and, as Granville Barker puts it—"a magnificent statement of a magnificent theme", and "has a proper formality and there is a certain megalithic grandeur about it, Lear dominating it, that we associate with Greek tragedy."

In Act II, we find a parallel quarrel of Goneril and Regan. In Act III, the main theme comes to a climax; the IV depicts a picture of the wreck, both of Lear and Gloucester, wherein the main plot and the sub-plot are perfectly blended together; and Act V leads us to the final catastrophe.

As we proceed from Act I towards Act II, we find the play rising in a grand crescendo of energy—a sweep of fifteen hundred lines that would defy the energies of the toughest actor and perhaps the playwright too, would feel exhausted. Lear is exhausted, and sleep-like benediction comes to him. The audience as well as actors would be clamorous for the relief. The Fool, outjesting the King's heart-struck injuries, acts as a 'sedative'. Edgar, as poor Tom and Kent, provides relief against the tempestuous frenzy of Lear. Besides, Acts II and III are interspersed with scenes calculated to save the actors' energy for the climax of the movement.

Act III is at the pitch of its argument but the playwright affords two scenes, *viz.*, iii and v. interspersed between the dominant scenes of the storm, to Edmund's treachery with his new turn to deceive his father. This provides relief as well as contrast to the spiritual exaltation of the other scenes. The second of three storm scenes marks the turning point of the main plot, where we find the proud old King, kneeling humbly and alone in his wretched plight to pray. This is followed by a frightful scene, *viz.*, the blinding of Gloucester.

The last two Acts are significant for their brevity as well as power. Granville Barker observes:

"The interaction of circumstance and character is close-knit and complex, but it is clear. Keep it clear and it can be made effective to any audience that will listen, and is not distracted from listening....Given continuity of performance and no more insistence upon whereabouts than the action itself will

indicate, the impression produced by the constant busy movement into our sight and out again of purposeful, passionate or distracted figures, is in itself of great dramatic value, and most congruous to the plot and counter-plot of the play's ending. The order for Lear and Cordelia's murder, the quarrel over Edmund's precedence, Albany's sudden self-assertion, Regan's sickness, Edgar's appearance, the fight, his discovery of himself, Goneril's discomfiture, the telling of Kent's secret, Regan and Goneril's death, the alarm to save Lear and Cordelia—Shakespeare, by the Folio text, gets all this into less than two hundred lines, with a fair amount of rhetoric and incidental narrative besides.......He has kept a technical master-stroke for his ending :

'Enter Lear with Cordelia in his arms.'

There should be a long, still pause, while Lear passes slowly in with his burden, while they all stand respectful as of old to his Majesty. ....The same company are here, or all but the same, and they await his pleasure. Even Regan and Goneril are here to give him ghastly homage. But he knows none of them—save for a blurred moment Kent, whom he banished,—none but Cordelia. And again he reproaches her silence ; for

'Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.'

Then his heart breaks."

THE PLOT-SCHEME OF "KING LEAR"

The plot-scheme, as given by the well-known critic Richard G. Moulton, is as follows :

Main Plot :

Problem Situation : Lear [Passion] : a father, reversing moral equilibrium of the family.

Solution :

Triple Sequence of Events
- (1) Nemesis (double) on the father.
- (2) Sufferings of the Innocent : Cordelia.
- (3) Power used by the evils for their own destruction : Goneril and Regan.

Generating Subaction; Cordelia's outburst of temper.

Dependent Under-plot :

Generating Subaction : Edmund's plot against Edgar.

Problem Situation : Gloucester [Weakness] : a father reversing moral equilibrium of the family.

Solution :

Triple Sequence of Events
- (1) Nemesis (double) on the father.
- (2) Sufferings of the Innocent : Edgar.
- (3) Power used by the evil for his own destruction.

Link Subaction
- < Albany : Rising / Cornwall : Sinking
- < Oswald : Servility and Nemesis / Kent : Plainness and Pathos.

Enveloping Action : War of England and France.

Relief : Concentrated in centre of the movement.

Triple Madness
- Real : Lear
- Feigned : Edgar
- Professional : Fool.

With an accompaniment of Nature Passion : The Storm.

INTERWEAVING OF THE TWO PLOTS

Shakespeare has very successfully blended the two different stories into one. In doing so he recklessly repudiated the unity of action, the Aristotelian canon, which he very richly compensated by maintaining a great unity, *viz.*, the unity of effect, which seems to spring from two causes :

(i) It is due to the general parallelism of the two stories, both of which begin from one underlying fact—namely, the abrogation of family relations and ties, wherein, according to Furnival, lies the essential 'ethical connection of the plot and the under-plot'.

(ii) The stories develop through the events, so diverse in nature that the similarity of idea does not produce any monotony. The general likeness of the two stories is quite effective in creating an atmosphere of harmony. Each story in itself, may seem far from being natural, but a happy blending of the two produces an effect of the tumultuous tempest in the moral world.

Schlegel in his most valuable comments, says : "And with what ingenuity and skill, the two main parts of the composition are dovetailed into one another ! The pity felt by Gloucester for the fate of Lear becomes the means, which enables his son Edmund to effect his complete destruction, and affords the outcast Edgar an opportunity of being the saviour of his father. On the other hand, Edmund is active in the cause of Goneril and Regan, and the criminal passion, which they both entertain for him, induces them to execute justice on each other and on themselves. The laws of the drama have therefore been sufficiently complied with, but that is the least. It is the very combination which constitutes the sublime beauty of the work. The two causes resemble each other in the main : an infatuated father is blind towards his well-disposed child, and the unnatural offspring, to whom he gives the preference, requite him by the destruction of his entire happiness. But all the circumstances are so different that these stories, while they make an equal impression on the heart, form a complete contrast for the imagination. Were Lear alone to suffer from his daughter, the impression would be limited to the powerful compassion felt by us for his private misfortune.

But two such unheard-of examples taking place at the same time have the appearance of a great commotion in the moral world : the picture becomes gigantic and fills us with such alarm as we should entertain at the idea that "the heavenly bodies might one day fall out of their regular orbits."

Edmund exploits Gloucester's active sympathy for Lear, to carry out his own crooked designs. At his orders, the poor Cordelia is hanged and through his agency alone, the story of the two great souls comes to an end in paralysing darkness. Thus we find Edmund's evil genius bestriding both the worlds of crime. Edgar also helps in binding the two halves of the play. Lear's developing madness is much more intensified by Edgar's simulation of it. By defying Edmund and slaying him, he becomes the true successor to Lear's throne. The alliance of Edgar and Albany is the alliance between "the sole survivor of the one set of characters and the sole survivor of the other set."

THE ENDING OF THE PLAY

A happy ending to 'King Lear' would be quite unnatural, incompatible and "an anticlimax." Charles Lamb observes:

"A happy ending ! as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through.—The flayings of his feelings alive, did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorous thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation, why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy ? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gift robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station,—as if at nis years, and with his experience, anything was left but to die !"

The tragic ending of the play, *i.e.*, the death of Lear, becomes as natural as it is inevitable. We know it but too well that Lear's sufferings are such that nothing in this world can set right. Death alone can release him from the tortures of the present world, wherein no charm is left to him, after sweet Cordelia's departure from it, destroying his fond dream of a blissful life in prison : **V. iii. 8-14.**

"Come, let's away to prison ;
We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage :
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness : so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news...."

The actual death-blow is not his bereavement but his ecstasy in imagining that Cordelia is still alive—V. iii. 265-67.

"This feather stirs ; she lives ! if it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt."

The play, according to Bradley, may be called "The Redemption of King Lear." Muir suggests that "Shakespeare was certainly in a ruthless mood when he wrote 'King Lear,' and his religious attitude provides no easy comfort, and makes no concession to sentimentality," and further adds, "but we see Cordelia and Kent, uncontaminated by the evil around them ; we see Lear and Gloucester painfully learning wisdom ; we see Albany increase in moral stature, as he frees himself from his infatuation, and we see Edgar change from a credulous fool to a brave and saintly champion."

Difference of opinion prevails among the critics in regard to the death of Cordelia. Some think that had Shakespeare allowed the miseries of the play to be concluded in the Reconciliation scene, it would have been much better. Others are of the opinion that Cordelia's death was merely due to her original obstinacy and reticence.

Muir observes : "It is right that the final scenes of the play should make us shrink, but it is wrong that we should wish them altered. When Lear banished Cordelia and when Gloucester committed adultery, they unleashed horrors—treachery, blindness, madness, murder, suicide and war—and the innocents are at least as vulnerable as the guilty....Of those critics who complain that she died guiltless, we can only enquire if they would rather she had died guilty. There is, of course, something gratuitous and supererogatory about her death, since it could have been averted, if Edmund had spoken a few minutes earlier; and Shakespeare seems to underline the futility of Albany's prayer for the safety of Lear and of Cordelia."

The dramatic mind of Shakespeare, working to the tune of,

"As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods ;
They kill us for sport"

could not have been pricked by the scruples of sentimental ethics. Schlegel thinks, convincing us that Lear after surviving so many sufferings, can only die in a tragical manner from his grief for the death of Cordelia ; and if he is also to be saved and to pass the remainder of his days in happiness, the whole will lose its significance. The 'faint belief' of the persons of the play "requires a wider range than the dark pilgrimage on earth to be established in its utmost extent."

NAHUM TATE'S ADAPTATION OF KING LEAR

Ever since the theatrical revival at the time of Restoration and until the end of nineteenth century, it had been more or less customary to bring on the stage adapted versions (people often refer to them as 'perversions' contemptuously) of Shakespeare's plays. A minor dramatist named Nahum Tate produced adapted version of 'King Lear', as early as in 1680, and since that time, until the year 1838, Tate's perversion remained 'the only acting copy'. During these about one hundred and sixty years, many great actors, including Betterton, Garrick, Kemble, Edmund Kean—appeared on the stage. In the year 1838, Macready successfully attempted to restore the original version of Shakespeare's tragedy. Macready, in his "Reminiscences", tells us:

"Tate's 'King Lear' was the only acting copy from the date of its production until the restoration of Shakespeare's tragedy at Covent Garden in 1838. Previously to that, I think in the year 1823, or a little later, the play, Tate's, was acted by Kean, with the last scene of the original restored. I believe the elder Colman put out an alteration, but I question whether it was acted ; certainly it did not hold its place on the stage."

Some of the chief features of Tate's sentimental attempt at his version are as follows :

(i) When the play opens, Gloucester is already convinced of Edgar's treachery, and Edmund is in his high favour.

(ii) As the royal procession is entering, before the division of the kingdom, Edgar declares his love for Cordelia, to which she also quickly responds.

(iii) Cordelia is cast off, and Burgundy refuses her ; of the King of France, there is no mention at all in the play.

(iv) The exclusion of the character of Fool signifies the extremely gallicized taste of the age which Nahum Tate belongs to.

(v) The duel between Edgar and Edmund takes place, after much boasting on both sides of their legitimate and illegitimate births. Edmund falls, and Regan and Goneril avow their love and jealousy over his bleeding body.

(vi) The happy ending, with Lear's restoration to his kingdom and the union of the lovers, is peculiar about Tate's piece.

Nahum Tate was ambitious in what he said to justify his adaptation—

"'Twas my good fortune to light on one expedient to rectify what was wanting in the Regularity and Probability of the Tale, which was to run through the whole, as Love betwixt Edgar and Cordelia ; that never changed a word in the original."

....Tate wanted the "tale to conclude in a success to the innocent distrest persons" and this desire of Tate draws our sympathy. The superficial wish that the tragedy ended a little differently is almost irresistible, but it could not, the catastrophe being inevitable. Furness defends him, saying that "Tate was little to blame ; he was merely an exponent of the age in which he lived and no genius." He further adds : "We must remember, too, that Lear is the sublimest tragedy ever written, so awful in its grandeur that it almost passes into a realm by itself. Charles Lamb avers that it ought not to be acted at all, and in thus saying he exonerates Tate, to a certain extent, in the very breath with which he condemns him. Tate's version is better than none ; if we had not Shakespeare's play to read, surely it were better to listen to Tate than not to know the play at all. There is more of Shakespeare in Tate's version than there is of Tate."

In my humble opinion, by Tate's adaptation, the play lost in something substantial, while it gained in nothing. I fully agree with Addison, who in his "Spectator" pronounced his verdict :

"'King Lear' is an admirable tragedy....as Shakespeare wrote it ; but as it is reformed according to the chimerical notion of poetical justice,....it has lost half its beauty."

THE POETRY AND THE MUSIC

The Poetry. Why is Shakespeare "not of an age, but for all time ?" The one significant reason, above all, is the sublimity of his poetry, which brings some more essential elements in its train, sweep of vision, imaginative power, pathos, depth of ideas, magical beauty of phrase, brilliant imagery, in all which Shakespeare seems to touch his high water mark in case of "King Lear." As for imaginative breadth, "Antony and Cleopatra" surpasses it, and as for depth of thought it is surpassed by "Hamlet" ; but so far as the amalgamation of all these aforesaid qualities is concerned, the play is, beyond any shadow of doubt, second to none.

From the sublime imagery of

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks ! rage ! blow !
You cataracts and hurricanes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks !
You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head ! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world !
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once
That makes ingrateful man !"

To the moving pathos of

"Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night,
Against my fire."

—What a wide leap ! Behind Lear's personal sorrows and sufferings stand the sorrows and sufferings of the entire world. "Behind the severing of the bond between Lear and his daughters stands the breakdown of all the hard-and-fast limits of the universe. The imagery gives the horizon of the individual occurrence a comprehensive perspective ; it transforms human matters into mighty universal events," says a critic, supported by Bradley, according to whom "feeling which haunts us in 'King Lear' as though we were witnessing something universal —a conflict not so much of particular persons, as of the powers of good and evil in the world."

In the agonized cry of Lear to the element in their fury, metaphor races metaphor. Each compound word is a picture in itself, beautiful and captivating. "Vaunt-couriers" and

"thought-executing" suggest aspect of mediaeval life. Shakespeare, in a unique manner, from this crowded and concentrated imagery, can nose-dive to a staggering simplicity of words that draw their power solely from the poetry of feeling—like that of Cordelia, "I am, I am", and "No cause, no cause". Is there a more touching portrait of a heart, deeply sorrowful, under the heavy pressure of compunction than the one evoked by the homely lines in which Lear, kneeling before his daughter, Cordelia, entreats her not to mock him?—

"Pray—do not mock me, sir,
I am a very foolish fond old man
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less ;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind."

In the verse, the freedom demanded by dramatic speech is carried to its *ne plus ultra*, but the frame of the blank verse is never strained. All the suppleness of prose is here, and all the intensity of verse.

This plasticity of verse is very well exhibited in Lear's speeches which prepare for the onset of madness, and in the great scene of Reconciliation. Lear, oblivious of the dreadful realities, finds an immeasurable joy in his reunion with Cordelia. Gone is his formal feeling of "Sovereign shame". He fondly desires to live happily with her—

"Come, let's away to prison ;
We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage :
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness : so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news ; and we'll talk with them too,
Who loses and who wins ; who's in, who's out ;
And take upon 's the mysteries of things,
As if we were God's spies."

Like angels, commissioned to survey and report,—("God's spies"—they would be) the lives of men by penetrating through the occult motives, which govern the human activities.

Succinctness and concentration enrich Shakespeare's poetry a good deal. "Ripeness is all", only in these three words is compressed the volume of ethics. It testifies to the austerity

of an artist who can strip himself of all finery when he comes to reveal the profound truths of the moral and spiritual life. The play is richly inlaid with terse sentences of weighted meaning :

(i) "I am a man, more sinned against than sinning."

(ii) "Humanity must perforce prey on itself."

(iii) "Truth 's a dog most to kennel."

(iv) "Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend."

(v) "Jesters do oft prove prophets."

(vi) "Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile."

(vii) "We are not the first,
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst."

(viii) "Myself could else out-frown false fortune's frown.

(ix) "Take upon 's the mysteries of things."

(x) "I stumbled when I saw."

(xi) "Handy-dandy, which is the justice, and which is the thief."

Collocation and compound words have the same intensity and concentration ; and frequently an audacious originality:

(i) "He childed, as I fathered."

(ii) "This child-changed father."

(iii) "Pelican daughters."

(iv) "Thought-executing fires."

(v) "Your loop'd and window'd raggedness."

(vi) "To out-jest his heart-struck injuries."

(vii) "Lust-dieted man, that slaves your ordinance."

(viii) "Death-practised duke."

(ix) "A proclaim'd prize."

(x) "Our power shall do a courtesy to our wrath."

(xi) "Strives in his little world of man to outstorm
The to and fro conflicting wind and rain."

Edgar's description of the Dover Cliff is an excellent example of superb evocative poetry :

"How fearful
And dizzy it 's to cast one's eyes so low !

The crows and choughs that wing the midway air,
Show scarce so gross as beetles ; half way down
Haugs one that gathers sampire, dreadful trade":

and

"From the dread summit of this chalky bourn,
Look up a-height ; the shrill-gorg'd lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard."

Ifor Evans rightly remarks : "Nowhere were Shakespeare's intentions in language more complex and his success more complete than in King Lear."

The Music. About the music there is little to be said. I do not imagine much improvement possible upon "the consort of viols", to the quiet harmonies of which Lear was meant, one presumes, to be waked. The sonnet that announces his first regal appearance should be noted, as well as the flourish to herald France and Burgundy, and the ceremonial difference between the two. The "Horns within", which prelude Lear's return from hunting, ask no comment. A trumpet is used with dramatic effect before Cornwall's entrance in Act II, Scene i, it reinforces Gloucester's excitement. The same sound stirs Lear a little later and strings him up for the encounter with Goneril. And towards the play's end, the triple sounding by the herald, to be answered, when our suspense is keenest, by Edgar's trumpet without, is a most carefully calculated dramatic effect.* We have noticed earlier how the battle in which Cordelia's forces are defeated, is dramatically minimized, its musical symbolism consists only of an alarum and an alarum and retreat. But the "Drum afar off", to the ominous sound of which the longest and most varied scene of the fourth Act closes, has very definite value. So has the dead march with which the play itself ends.

The Fool is allotted no formal and completed song, but, needless to say, his snatches of melody should be melodious indeed. This musical and lyrical relief to the strain of Lear's passion is....an essential part of the play's stagecraft. The technique of the singing should not be artificial; rather that of an accomplished folk-song singer. And where no authentically traditional tunes exist, folk music will prove a sufficient quarry.

—*Harley Granville Barker*: "*Prefaces to Shakespeare.*"

*Beethoven found a similar one useful in "Fidelio".

"Soft music playing" of Act IV, sc. vii, shows that the belief in the efficacy of music in the treatment of the insane is very old though it is not invariably beneficial.

Nevertheless it may be accepted that on the stage, music is always an effective accompaniment, particularly in pathetic scenes.

"A tent in the French camp, Lear on a bed asleep, soft music playing. . . ."

Nothing exclusively music, but accompanied by love, seems to replace for a while tempest and mental agony, "the music of a daughter's love to heal the harsh unmusic of madness", as Wilson Knight puts it :

"O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature !
Th' untuned and jarring senses, O ! wind up
Of this child-changed father."

Sleep, music, nature's simples and Cordelia's love—these are the medicines, prescribed by the Doctor. The Doctor would now have him wake : "Louder the music there !" (IV. vii. 25). Cordelia kisses him and speaks :

"O my dear father ! Restoration hang
The medicine on my lips, and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made !"

The result is that now tempest is divinely enclosed in music. Lear wakes, and is redeemed into sanity, that brings peace and love in its train. "Again in Lear", says Wilson Knight, "we have a powerful tempest-music opposition. Consider the Shakespearean sonnet where child and father and happy mother sing one note of family concord. That harmony is broken here in the first Act, the 'tempest' of division, anguish, and madness ensues, then restoration is born for a while on Cordelia's lips and Lear wakes, as a mortal man to immortality, into music and love."

"KING LEAR" ON THE STAGE

"King Lear" was a fairly popular play in Shakespeare's own time and immediately afterwards. There is some evidence to that. At all events it was one of the best parts of the famous Richard Burbage, Shakespeare's fellow-actor and friend. After

the Restoration the play was revived, and acted several times with Betterton in the title role. But not unlike others of Shakespeare's plays, produced after 1660, "King Lear" had to be altered to meet the taste of the day. Accordingly it fell into the hands of Nahum Tate "the author of the worst alterations of Shakespeare, the worst version of the Psalms, and the worst continuation of a great poem ('Absalom and Achitophel') extant," and Tate, as Lamb has said of him, "put his book in the nostrils of the Leviathan."

Tate's version was, however, performed about one hundred and sixty years, and was represented by such actors as Garrick, Kean, and Kemble. Kean ventured in 1823, to restore Shakespeare's last Act, but it was not until 1838 that Macready played Shakespeare's tragedy in its full form. Since then Shakespeare's "King Lear" has been played substantially as he himself wrote it.

Charles Lamb's Contention. With an imaginative insight, Lamb brought the results of his rare perceptions, in a passage in which he contends :

"The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted." He asserts: "So to see Lear acted—to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night—has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of 'Lear' ever produced in me......The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm, which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements, that any actor can be to represent Lear : they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual : the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano : they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches. It is his mind which is laid bare....On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weakness, the importance of rage ; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear,—we are in his mind, we are sustained by a grandeur which buffles the malice of daughters and storms ; in the aberrations of his reason, we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodised from the ordinary purposes of life, but exerting its powers, as

the wind blows where it listeth, as will upon the corruptions and abuses of the mankind. What have looks, or tones to do with the sublime identification of his age with that of the 'heavens' themselves, when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children he reminds them that "they themsleves are old ?"

Shakespeare was, after all, a practical playwright. Like all other plays, written by him, he also meant the "King Lear" to be acted. That fact should be clearly borne in mind. The play was very successfully acted before the King at White Hall. Whatever his faults, James I seems to have a liking for good drama. That Burbage's performance of "King Lear" remained a vivid memory, cannot be gainsaid. Even during the Restoration, it was one of the nine plays which Davenant selected for his theatre. Merely by citing Tate, Shakespearean stage-worthiness cannot be proved. A very important question to be considered is how far is it not Tate rather than Shakespeare that Charles Lamb condemns? Lamb has Shakespeare's play in his mind but unfortunately he had never seen it acted. Complainingly does he say : "Tate has put his hook in the nostrils of this Leviathan for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. Our regret is that he never considers Shakespeare's drama in relation to Shakespeare's stage.

Granville-Barker observes : "Lamb's essay should be read, of course as a whole. He loved the drama ; the theatre alternately delighted and exasperated him. The orotund acting of his day, its conventional tricks can have been but a continual offence to his sensitive ear and nicely of taste. He here takes his revenge—and it is an ample one—for many evenings of such suffering. He never stopped to consider whether there might not be more even to the actor's despised art than that."

The simplicities of the Elizabethan theatre could scarcely be found in the seventeenth century theatre, that was mainly "a theatre of spectacle." The Elizabethan stage was open to the sky and was practically bare of scenic apparatus ; hence the poet-dramatist had primarily to rely on his use of poetry to visualize the different scenes convincingly.

Shakespeare, instead of scenic accessories, reckoned on the imagination of his audience ; rather on their "willing suspen-

sion of disbelief, which constitutes the poetic faith." He wanted his audience to conjure up the terrific convulsion of nature, besides witnessing the agony of the mighty figure on the stage. This double purpose the playwright could achieve through his poetry, meant for a special stage and audience. It was audience—the groundlings apart, very much susceptible to the most sublime flights of poetry on the stage. On the contrary, the seventeenth century audience looking for rhetoric on the stage, received it abundantly from the actor. Actors without imagination may impersonate Shakespeare's Lear, but with little success. The storm-scenes were not meant to be altered so as to suit the absurd attempts of realistic production.

In saying that Shakespeare's Lear cannot be acted, Lamb merely perhaps implied that it cannot be acted on a spectacular stage, a stage not adapted to Shakespearean art. If he did not imply that, he must have been oblivious of the intimate relationship that invariably existed in between Shakespeare's craftsmanship and the conditions of Elizabethan stagecraft.

Bradley's View. Bradley's criticism is rather more searching and profounder than that of Charles Lamb. He says : " 'King Lear' seems to me Shakespeare's greatest achievement, but it seems to me not his best play," and adds, "The stage is the best of strictly dramatic quality, and 'King Lear' is too huge for the stage....It seems immensely effective in the theatre ; three of them—the two between Lear and Goneril, and between Lear, Goneril and Regan, and the ineffably beautiful scene in the fourth Act between Lear and Cordelia—lose in the theatre very little of the spell they have for imagination ; and the gradual interweaving of the two plots is almost as masterly as in 'Much Ado About Nothing.' But (not to speak of defects due to mere carelessness) that which makes the 'peculiar' greatness of 'King Lear'—the immense scope of the work ; the mass and variety of intense experience which it contains ; the interpenetration of sublime imagination, piercing pathos, and humour almost as moving as the pathos ; the vastness of the convulsion both of nature and of human passion, the vagueness of the scene where the action takes place, and of the movements of the figures which cross this scene ; the strange atmosphere, cold and dark, which strike us as we enter this scene, enfolding those figures and magnifying their dim outline like a winter mist ; the half-realized suggestions

of vast universal powers working in the world of individual fears and passions, all this interferes with dramatic clearness, even when the play is read, and in the theatre not only refuses to reveal itself fully through the sense but seems to be almost in contradiction with their reports."

Bradley further illuminates : "The temptation of Othello and the sense of Duncan's murder may lose upon the stage, but they do not lose their 'essence', and they gain as well as lose. The storm-scenes in 'King Lear' gain nothing, and their very 'essence' is destroyed." For this 'essence' is poetry, and in conclusion, Bradley says : "....Such poetry as cannot be transferred to the space behind the foot-lights, but has its being only in imagination. Here then is Shakespeare at his very greatest, but not the mere dramatist Shakespeare."

Obviously, as one may surmise it, Bradley's view is considerably detached from "the mere dramatist Shakespeare" and his fellows the actors. It is somewhat queer to say that several scenes of the play were "immensely effective in the theatre", and then add that they lost "in the theatre very little of the spell they have for imagination."

A fitting reply to Bradley's "weighty" argument comes from Granville-Barker, who asks :

"Why should we expect to receive the full value of a great drama at a first hearing ? Do we expect to be able to fathom the full significance of a great melody when we first hear it ? Why should everything become absolutely clear, all at once, when we witness a play ? Can we not allow it to sink down deeper and deeper as we witness it a second time and a third time ?"

The learned critic further propounds : "In fact, the more profound a play, the more does it demand from us repeated witnessing. It does not mean that the play is too profound or too huge for the stage. The intellectual response to a play may differ from spectator to spectator. One understands it more, another less ; and what one understands at one time may be more than what one understands at another. Nevertheless, a play aims at producing an effect upon all. And that 'King Lear' does in spite of its hugeness and complexity."

Let the style of the dialogue in verse and prose be examined ; let the sudden pauses, the jerks and turns even in

the most passionate speeches, the alternation of lofty flights with the homeliest simplicity—be considered ; the inevitable conclusion that we will arrive at, would be that the play "King Lear" was written by Shakespeare with his inner eye on the stage, as well as on the actors and the audience. Granville Barker comments : "Well this contrast and reconciliation of grandeur and simplicity, this setting of vision in terms of actuality, this inarticulate passion which breaks now and again into memorable phrases, does not even the seeming failure of expression give us a sense of the helplessness of humanity pitted against higher powers ! All the magnificent art of this is directed to one end ; the play's acting in a theatre", and he further says : "If Bradley is right, not the most perfect performance can be a fulfilment, can be aught but a betrayal of 'King Lear'. There is the issue. The thing is, of course, incapable of proof. The best that imperfect human actors can give, must come short of perfection, and the critic can always retort to their best that his imagination betters it. Bradley's argument is weighty. Yet—with all deference to a great critic—I protest that, as it stands, it is not valid. He is contending that a practical and practised dramatist has here written a largely impracticable play. Before condemning these 'storm-scenes', he should surely consider their stagecraft—their mere stagecraft. For may not 'the mere dramatist' have his answer hidden there ?"

LEAR'S INSANITY

Though Lear does not run mad till Act III, yet even in the opening scene of the play, we find that his behaviour towards Cordelia has all the appearance of a "judgment totally depraved." Mrs. Lennox believes that Lear was really insane from the very first. She observes : "Lear banishes (Cordelia) from his sight, consigns her over to want, and loads her with the deepest imprecations. What less than frenzy can inspire a rage so groundless, and a conduct so absurd ? Lear, while in his senses, acts like a mad man, and from his first appearance to his last seems to be wholly deprived of his reason."*

The groundlings of the Elizabethan theatre had a liking to see mad characters on the stage, and it was partly motivated

* "Shakespeare Illustrated," iii, 287.

by their love of sensationalism. Shakespeare invariably exploited the tastes of the audience, whenever he found it conducive to his dramatic purpose. He was endowed with a vast knowledge about the phenomena of madness, his understanding and observation thereof being more profound than any of his contemporary playwrights. He was very much interested in taking some of his characters,—for example, Lady Macbeth, Othello, Hamlet to the border of insanity and even more captivating than the land itself, is this borderland for the students of Psychology. "Lear is a marvellous example of his study in insanity. To exhibit madness in a play is rather a difficult job. Obviously, the ravings of a mad character should be very much different from the ravings of a mad man in actual life. The method and the meaning, that we find in dramatic madness, are not to be found in case of the other. The character may speak pure nonsense or "matter and impertinency mix'd", but whatever he utters must interest us as profoundly as does sense. The words sounding like insanity, paradoxically however, must bear in them an undercurrent of sanity. In spite of all this, the madness in the character should be a real one and not merely a dramatic fake. The character, for the very reason that he is mad, should interest us more and more.

Its Dramatic Effect. In the tragedy of "King Lear" the dramatist has represented the principal character as driven to madness by the unexpected ingratitude of his daughters. To put it more scientifically, Shakespeare has represented a strong predisposition to the disease as being rapidly developed under the application of an adequate exciting cause. He does not, however, aim to excite our curiosity by a liberal display of wildness and fury, nor does he awaken our compassion by the horrid spectacle of a mind in ruins, being unconscious of its wretchedness. Dr. I. Ray reveals in his valuable comments :* "He (Shakespeare) aimed at dramatic effect, by opening the fountains of sympathy for a being of noble nature and generous impulses, cruelly despoiled of the highest endowment of man, but not so far as to lose all traces of his original qualities, or cease for a moment to command our deepest respect. In Lear we have a man of a hot and hasty temper, of strong and

* "American Journal of Insanity," April, 1847.

generous passions, of a credulous and confiding disposition, governed by impulses rather than deliberate judgment, rendered impatient of restraint or contradiction by the habit of command, with a nervous temperament strongly susceptible, to the vexations of life, and moreover with all these moral infirmities aggravated by old age. With these simple elements of character is mingled and assimilated more or less of mental derangement, with equal regard to pathological propriety and dramatic effect."

As a dramatic method, insanity becomes a medium for revealing the abysses and recesses of the human mind. When the reins of reason are let loose, the under-world of personality, with all its things lovely as well as dark, becomes, through speech and action and incoherent words and apparently illogical leaps of the mind, significant. Lear's insanity illumines the workings of his unconscious and subconscious self, so that we perceive in the radiograph of his mind—

(*i*) The thoughts and impulses of Lear in the years that have passed ;

(*ii*) his obsessions during the days of mental strain, responsible for bringing about the collapse ;

(*iii*) the expansion of human compassions, with an awakening of the moral greatness, which had lain passive in him ;

(*iv*) his remorse, accompanied by an uneasiness of the conscience ; and

(*v*) the growth and change in the inner man, *i.e.*, of Lear.

Insanity is shown in a state of flux, its process being revealed in several phases. Lear's insanity is not something incessant, because the lucid intervals show us that even when the mind is overwhelmed there are rifts in the clouds, so as to reveal the depths of the serenest blue. That these clouds are lifted even for hours, can be confirmed by what Kent utters, IV. iii. 39-48 :

Kent. Well, sir, the poor distress'd Lear's i' the town ;
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Gentleman. Why, good Sir ?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him; his own unkindness.
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To the dog-hearted daughters,—these things sting
His mind so venomously that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Contrition and compunction work deep into Lear's heart in the moments which bring him "in his better tune." The moments such as these bring Lear in a communion with humanity, embracing the houseless, needy wretches of this globe : III. iv. 28 ;

"Poor naked wretches, whereso'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons, such as these ?"

Factors Leading to Insanity. The inner forces, that conspire to undermine Lear's reason are as follows :

(*i*) His proneness to passionate and violent outbursts of temper ;

(*ii*) His overbearing nature, he having altogether stripped himself of power, is too weak to have its way any longer against Goneril and Regan ;

(*iii*) His susceptibility to filial ingratitude ; his childlike trust foredoomed to betrayal ; and his thirst for love ;

(*iv*) His compunction for the injustice, done by him to his sweet and innocent Cordelia; and his impotent yearning to be revenged on his ingrate daughters ; and

(*v*) The hysteric emotion that surges up often in him, and has to be kept down persistently ; and the final despair.

Dr. Carl Stark observes the following :*

"Only rarely do trouble, disillusion, violent affection, alone by themselves, lead directly to insanity in a character, disposed thereto ; but, generally, in addition to these causes, there is a condition of the body that immediately occasions the outbreak of madness. The fact Shakespeare fully recog-

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*Koenig Lear. Eine Psychiatrische Shakespeare-studie, Stuttgart, 1871, p. 53.

nises, and it is strikingly observable that Lear, shortly before the bursting forth of his disease, had in heaviness made a fatiguing journey, that in this condition, bodily and mental, consumed by the most violent emotions, he is at last exposed in the cold night to the rage of a fearful storm. Only too frequently it is just such circumstance of bodily or mental exhaustion that gives the impulse to mental disease and to that form of it manifested in Lear—delirium."

It is mainly the psychological forces discernible in the hinterland of the premonitions of Lear's insanity, that make it inevitable. It is worth while to quote Dr. H. N. Hudson on this point : "So long, as his (Lear's) heart had something to lay hold of and cling to and rest upon his mind was the abode of order and peace. But now that his feelings are rendered objectless, torn from their accustomed holdings, and thrown back upon themselves, there springs up a wild chaos of the brain, a whirling tumult and anarchy of the thoughts which, till imagination has time to work, chokes down his utterance. Then comes the inward tugging conflict, deep as life, which gradually works up his imaginative forces, and kindles them to a preternatural resplendence. The crushing of his aged spirit brings to light its hidden depths and buried niches. Thus his terrible energy of thought of speech, as imagination rallies to his aid, grows naturally from the struggle of his feelings—a struggle that seems to wrench his whole being into dislocation, convulsing and upturning his soul from the bottom. Thence proceeds, to quote Mr. Hallam, 'that splendid madness, not absurdly sudden, as in some tragedies, but in which the strings that keep his reasoning powers together, give way one after the other in the frenzy of rage and grief."

The storm, bursting on Lear's head at the psychological moment, converts the emotional strain into real madness. We find it reinforced by the hope of vengeance in the second storm-scene. The imaginative forces in Lear's mind are worked up by the storm, which also "kindles them to a preternatural resplendence." Dr. Bucknill points out :* "Intellectual energy may, indeed, sometimes be seen to grow stronger under the greatest trials of life, but never when the

*"The Mad Folk of Shakespeare," 1867, p. 164.

result of these trials is mental disease. So far as eloquence is the result of passion, excitement of passion may stimulate its display ; and it is remarkable that so long as Lear retains the least control over his passion, his imagination remains comparatively dull, his eloquence tame. It is only when all the barriers of conventional restraint are broken down, that the native and naked force of the soul displays itself. The display arises from the absence of restraint and not from the stimulus of disease." It is not in corporal dimension but in intellectual, where the greatness of Lear lies. "The explosions of his passion", says Charles Lamb*, "are terrible as a volcano : they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind with all its riches. It is his mind, which is laid bare." The storm rouses his pity for all suffering creatures, in consequence of which the old man emerges to be much grander a personage, when "his wits begin to turn," than when he was imperial Lear.

Method in Madness. A method is discernible in Lear's madness, however wild and furious it may be—, some traces of that delicate thread, though broken in numerous points, can be perceived, forming the connecting link between many groups and patches of thought. Shakespeare was endowed with an abundant knowledge of this psychological law and hence we find all his representations of insanity characterized by wildness and irregularity, none-the-less it may quite easily be perceived that the disease is not assumed but real.

Lear is rendered helpless and quite incapable of chastising the acrimonious ingrates, in whose interests alone he stripped himself of the throne and the power. His wrath recoils upon itself, upon the chambers of his mind. Repressed impulses find themselves relieved in imagining situations for their free-play. The denials and deprivations of the outer world squeeze himself and his fancy fabricates situations, so as to satisfy his self-esteem. The imagined situations seem to acquire an objective vividness from the external world, Lear being in an actual state of mania. According to Dr. Somerville, Lear's "attacks of mania are to be regarded as unconscious attempts to escape from an enemy world into himself, so that his "thoughts' might be severed from his 'grief' :—

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*"Prose Works," ed. 1836, p. 121.

'And woes by wrong imagination lose
The knowledge of themselves'."

In the mock trial of Goneril and Regan, this fancy presumably takes the still more acute form of hallucination or externalization, of what is fancied. Close to the joint stool, he sees them before him and they are as real is a figure as Banquo is to Macbeth in the banquet scene. With a cold and defiant glare, Cordelia stands her ground, but the treacherous Regan is seen running away. He shouts :

"Stop her there !
Arms, arms, sword, fire ! Corruption in the place !
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape ?'

Presently, the mental projection vanishes and an obscure association of the distant past makes his mind leap back to the pursuit of game with his favourite dogs :

"The little dogs and all,
Tray, Blanch and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me."

He, led by imagination, feels that even his dogs, though proverbial for their fidelity, have turned against him. Another moment, he sees them leaving him alone and pursuing Regan. They have run her to earth and begun to tear her off :

"Then let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts ?" III. iv. 77-79.

In the later scene (IV. iv.) with Gloucester, a mounting block suggests to him horses as well as blocks used for hats and this brings an idea to him. Why not shoe a troop of horses with felt to prevent their sliding and noise, and then—

"....I'll put 't in proof,
And when I have, stol'n upon these son-in-laws,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill !"

No quarter need be given to them. This escape of the mind is peculiarly blended with self-chastisement, at his having begotten such she-monsters and he breaks into disgust at the lechery of womankind and bestial instincts of mankind as a whole. He shrieks :

"....fie, fie, fie ! pah, pah !
Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary,
To sweeten my imagination."

Gloucester's "case of eyes", blind as he is, suggests to him the sign of blind Cupid painted over the door of brothels. He throws his gauntlet at the squinting Cupid ; no more would he yield to the hypocritical wheedling of woman :

> "I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squint at me ?
> No, do thy worst, blind Cupid ; I'll not love."
>
> IV. vi. 138-139.

Matter and Impertinency Mix'd. Lear's moral nature is revealed in Act IV, scene iv ; where he has begun to feel the pangs of conscience. That his own unkindness to Cordelia has been stinging to him (Lear) is made obvious by Kent in scene iii. "A sovereign shame" stands at his elbow, reminding him of the past. The Gentleman, whom Cordelia sent to fetch him utters the words—

> "......Sir,
> You most dear daughter—."

Like a chased beast cries Lear—

> "No rescue ? What ! a prisoner ? I am even
> The natural fool of Fortune. Use me well
> You shall have ransom."

Was Fortune ever kind to him ? For ever has he been her fool ! There is no escape whatsoever. The only hope left to him is to beseech them to use him well on a promise of ransom. The words that follow, suggest that his has been a mortal agony and there has been a rush of blood in his brain. Dr. Somerville thinks, "He feels darts of dreadful physical pain in the head, as if his skull were being cleft in twain—one of the most frequent accompaniments of severe mental conflicts being almost splitting headaches." Lear says :

> "Let me have surgeons,
> I am cut to th' brains."

He is vexed to madness, but requires surgeons of an imaginary wound in the head. The Gentleman assures Lear : "You shall have anything", at this Lear bursts into tears :

> "No seconds ? all myself ?
> Why this would make a man of salt
> To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
> Ay, and for laying autumn's dust."

This is one aspect of Lear's moral awakening. The lucid intervals, when his mind is "in better tune" illumine the other, to the extent of Edgar's amazement—

"O ! matter and impertinency mix'd ;
Reason in madness."

Dr. Ray observes : "It is not uncommon to meet with mad men of the most wild and turbulent description mixing up their utterances with the shrewdest remarks upon men and things, and the keenest and coolest invective against those who have incurred their displeasure." Presumably the dramatist has used the utmost licence of his art in the pungent and disillusioning utterances of Lear, but if few mad persons have exhibited so much matter mingled with their impertinency as Lear, it may be asserted with sufficient justification that few men are endowed like Lear with such a blending of strong passions with natural shrewdness of understanding.

During the long years his regime he noticed the ingrained nepotism and corruption in the heart of man, wherefrom spreading over the judicial and political institutions. He could see through the callous self-righteousness of the parish constable lashing the whore, the mockery of the rich swindler hanging another "cozener" less wealthy than he, and the power, with which the money protects the rich criminal from the clutches of law :

"The great image of authority
A dog's obey'd in office.—
Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand !
Why dost thou lash that whore ? Strip thine own back ;
Thou hotly lust'st to use her in that kind
For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear ;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all."

IV. vi. 160-67.

This sordid spectacle has always disturbed and exasperated Lear's conscience. That he will no longer with folded hands apathetically look on, is seen in his resolution to make the unjust accusers realize that they are in no way better than their victims, the criminals. Earlier he had contrition and compunction for the reason that he could never bring solace and succour to the destitutes and the houseless poor wretches.

All the elements of his higher nature that had lain in cold storage, are awakened by madness. A critic says: "There is more justness of intellect in Lear's madness than in his right senses, as if the indestructible divinity of the spirit gleamed at times more brightly through the ruins of its early tabernacle."

Emotional Changes. Lear, after he has slept long, wakes up to tranquillising strains. Cordelia asks:

"How does my royal Lord ?
How fares your majesty ?"

Lear has been dreaming that he ceased to be and that his spirit has been consigned to a place of torture and fastened to a wheel of fire, thus being punished for his unjust treatment towards his sweet and innocent Cordelia. He says:

"You do me wrong to take me out o' th' grave ;
Thou art a soul in bliss ; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead."

The Lear, that comes back to normal consciousness and sanity is one whose spirit has undergone an alchemy. A great contrast is clearly discernible in between the two Lears ; the one that exclaimed, "Come not between the dragon and his wrath," "the bow is bent, make from the shaft," and the other that is meek and submissive now, with his most childlike simplicity and infinite tenderness. He is scarcely awake, but the picture drawn by the poet is most pathetic. He utters:

"Where have I been ? Where am I ? Fair daylight ?
I am mightily abus'd. I should e'en die with pity,
To see another thus."

When Cordelia wants him to hold his "hand in benediction" over her, Lear, his spirit altogether purged by an incessantly agonizing conscience, in his utmost humility utters:

"Pray do not mock me :
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less."

A mental cataclysm has brought about an inner sea change. The passage (V. iii. 8-19) is beyond analysis, nevertheless it is a surge of index of deeper things. Several critics find in his urtterances a touch of senility or a shade of brain-softening. Absolute humility, utmost simplicity—a recoil from the mischievous world, to suggest the 'touch' or 'shade' to the mundane-minded

observers. In fact, the words of Lear reveal to us an amalgam and transmutation of the memories associated with his childhood and boyhood, with the youthful, frolicsome lover, king and philosopher. Dr. Somerville, in his valuable comments says : "He (Lear) is the child-lover singing love-songs to his little sweetheart. He is partly the naughty boy, partly the old man, who has offended his darling and would be forgiven. He is the child-poet, weaving fantasies of song and fairy tale with his beloved. And then he is the king, with a quiet laugh, to the poor rogues who would brag of their familiarity with the ways of princes and kings and indulge in fashionable court-gossip. And then he is himself again, laughing at the philosophers who would explain 'God' and the universe, and claim an intimate acquaintanceship with Him and His ways ; and be immortal—assured that he will live for ever with Cordelia, watching the great ones come and go....Nevermore will he and his beloved be parted unless someone burns them out of prison."

That the reasons of madness produce certain specific emotional changes, is shown with a fine insight and a subtle analysis by Bucknill :* "The persistency with which critics have refused to see symptoms of insanity in Lear, until the reasoning power itself has become undeniably alienated, is founded upon that view of mental disease which has, until recently, been entertained even by physicians, and which is still maintained in courts of law, namely, that insanity is an affection of the intellectual, and not of the emotional, part of man's nature.... With the exception of those cases of insanity which arise from injuries, blood-poisons, sympathetic irritations, and other sources of an unquestionably physical nature, the common causes of insanity are such as produce emotional changes, either in the form of violent agitation of the passions or that of a chronic state of abnormal emotion, which pronounces itself in the habitually exaggerated force of some one passion or desire, whereby the healthy balance of the mind is at length destroyed. From these and other reasons founded upon the symptomology and treatment of insanity, upon the definite operation of the reasoning faculties, and their obvious inability to become motives for conduct without the intervention of emotional influence, and also from the wide chasm which inter-

*"The Mad Folk of Shakespeare," 1867, p. 167.

venes and must intervene between all the legal and medical definitions of insanity founded upon the intellectual theory and the facts as they are observed in the broad field of nature, the conclusion appears inevitable that no state of reasoning can, by itself, be the cause or condition of madness ; congenital idiocy and acquired dementia being alone excepted." The learned Doctor adds :

"The corollary of this is, that emotional disturbance is the cause and condition of insanity. This is especially obvious in the periods during which the disease is developing ; 'in the prodromic period of the disorder the emotions are always perverted while the reason remains intact.' Disorders of the intellectual faculties are secondary ; they are often, indeed, to be recognized as the morbid emotions transformed into perverted action of the reason ; but in no case are they primary and essential. How completely is this theory supported by the development of insanity, as it is portrayed in Lear ! Shakespeare, who painted from vast observation of nature, as he saw it without and left it within, places this great fact broadly and unmistakably before us. It has indeed long been ignored by the exponents of medical and legal science, at the cost of ever-futile attempts to define insanity by its accidents and not by its essence ; and following this guidance, the literary critics of Shakespeare have completely overlooked the early symptoms of Lear's insanity, and according to the custom of the world, have postponed its recognition until he is running about a frantic, raving mad man."

PHENOMENAL DEVELOPMENT : THE STAGES OF INSANITY

Lear's insanity is not suddenly sprung upon the audience, but it is convincingly led up to, through the process of a phenomenal development, the forces within him struggling with the changing circumstances. Shakespeare did not aim to excite curiosity by a liberal exhibition of wildness and fury and thereby rouse our compassion for the spectacle of a mind in ruins, hardly conscious of its wretched plight. The very opening scene of the play brings us face to face with Lear, who by the traits of his character could be driven to insanity, his mind being under excessive strains. "Indulgences and flatteries incident to his station" foster the rashness of his temper. Those who are

iniquitous, often have a keen eye for others' infirmities. Not without a grain of truth, does Goneril speak of "the imperfections of long-engraffed condition" and "the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them." When reticent Cordelia is unable to satisfy his morbid desire for expressions of love, he bursts into temper, his paroxysm bordering on insanity. He swears "by the mysteries of Hecate and the night" to disclaim all his "paternal care, propinquity and property of blood." Kent's reasonable intervention he meets with an outrageous temper. "Come not between the dragon and his wrath." This hot and hasty disposition is haughtily displayed by him at the moment when he bids adieu to his crown and sceptre. That Lear must dominate or ceases to be, is a fact, which can be gainsaid. According to Dr. Somerville, Lear was "always an over-generous man, he became more generous than ever. Always a rash and hasty man he became more rash and hasty."

Shakespeare, beyond any shadow of doubt, had an extraordinarily profound insight into abnormal psychology. Lear's own anticipations of impending insanity, provide us with a brilliant testimony to that :

"O fool ! I shall go mad." (II. iv. 288.)
"I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad." (II. iv. 220.)
"O ! let me not be mad, no mad, sweet heaven ;
Keep me in temper ; I would not be mad !" (I. v. 47-48.)
"My wits begin to turn." (III. ii. 67).
"That way madness lies ; let me shun that ;
No more of that." (III. iv. 21-22).

Dr. I. Ray observes : "Unable as the insane are to perceive their own insanity, yet this apprehension of its approach, so frequently repeated by Lear, usually occurs during its incubation. While still able to control his mental manifestations, the patient is tortured with anticipations of insanity ; but when he actually becomes so insane, that the most careless observer perceives the fact, then he entertains the most complacent opinion of his intellectual vigour and soundness. And yet this is one of the nicer traits of insanity which the ordinary observer would hardly he supposed to notice."

The sight of poor Tom, the Bedlam beggar, exercises a deep influence on Lear's mental disposition : "Insanity generates insanity." In Act III, Sc. vi, Lear may be discerned drifting off

the full tide of insanity. The mock-trial of the imaginary Goneril and Regan bear but a testimony to his hallucinations. As a matter of fact, in these scenes as well as in IV. vi, we find that Lear has gone clean mad and we see that a sublime compassion is roused in him, accompanied by preternatural quickening of his moral perceptions. The doctor's cure of his madness by artificially induced sleep brings him on the last stage of it. Like his Fool, he is a little touched in the brain. In the prison, he wishfully dreams of a happy life with his sweet and innocent Cordelia, like birds flying far away from this dreadfully singing world. The stages of Lear's insanity are as follows :

(*i*) A stage of anticipations, which includes the violent outbursts of his temper and impatience of opposition or protestations, whatever. Lear ceases to be a king, but it may be marked that in renouncing his crown, he does not, however, attain an inner renunciation. He still carries with him his choleric and overbearing disposition. He is highly susceptible to filial ingratitude and fondly does he expect his children to be grateful to him. An agonizing struggle between his passion and his endeavours at self-control and patience, strains his mind to the breaking point. Goneril's open demand that he should "disquantity his train", leads the irresistible currents of his nature to run riotous. His pent-up wrath gives way and presently Lear is perilously on the verge of insanity :

"....O Lear, Lear, Lear !
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in.
[*Striking his head.*
And thy dear judgment out !" (I. iv. 279-81)

In the fury of his passion, he invokes the worst of imprecations on Goneril. The idea of filial ingratitude remains a persistent obsession until his recovery. The storm invests his volcanic explosions with grandeur. Surrounded by the pudder of elements we find Lear, "A poor, infirm, weak and despis'd old man."

(*ii*) The contact with the Bedlam beggar, Tom, intensifies Lear's insanity. Moral perceptions and his sublime pity for mankind are roused. He ponders how after all the "poor naked wretches," with their "houseless heads and unfed sides," their "loop'd and window'd raggedness" protect themselves against the invasion of "seasons such as these."

(*iii*) The mock-trial of the imaginary Goneril and Regan brings him on a stage of hallucinations. He perceives through fancy, Regan running, he cries accusing the judges :

"........Stop her there !
Arms, arms, sword, fire ! Corruption in the place !
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

(*iv*) Lear's insanity is in its full tide in IV. iv. He is subject to hallucinations. He is indeed a "ruin'd piece of Nature." He finds Gloucester to be a "blind Cupid", nevertheless his decision, not to love, would remain unalterable :

"Dost thou squint at me ?
No, do thy worst, blind Cupid ; I'll not love."

I am quoting here Dr. I. Ray, as his observations give us a masterpiece commentary on Lear's insanity : The development of the early stage of Lear's insanity, or its incubation, as it is technically called, is managed with masterly skill, the more surprising as it is that stage of the disease which attracts the least attention. And the reason is, that the derangement is evinced, not so much by delusions or gross improprieties of conduct, as by a mere exaggreation of natural peculiarities, by inconsistencies of behaviour, by certain acts for which very plausible reasons are assigned, though they would never have been performed in a perfectly sound state of mind, by gusts of passion at every trifling provocation, or by doing very proper things at unseasonable times and occasions. With his own free-will and accord he gives away his kingdom, but finds it difficult to sink the monarch in the private citizen. He attaches to his person a band of riotous retainers, whose loose and lawless behaviour is destructive to the peace and good order of his daughter's household. Goneril describes them as,

"Men so disordered, so debauched and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn."

....Another life-like touch is given to the picture in Lear's attributing all his troubles to filial ingratitude, not being aware, of course, that he was on the high road to insanity long before he had any reason to doubt their kindness."

The veteran scholar, in the same context further reveals : "......The progress of Lear's insanity is represented with the closest fidelity to nature. It is not more different from the disease, as daily observed, than Lear's moral and intellectual

constitution, when in health, is different from ordinary man's. At every interview, reason seems to have lost somewhat more of its control. The mental excitement has been steadily increasing, until now, having reached its height, he goes about singing, dancing, and capering through the fields, fantastically decorated with weeds and flowers, looking, acting, and talking like a mad man. His perceptive organs are deceived by hallucinations ; and his discourse, though tinctured with his natural shrewdness and vigour of thought, is full of incoherence and incongruity. In short, he is now what is called 'raving'....To ordinary apprehension, the raving of a maniac is but an arbitrary jumble of words and phrases, between which no connecting threads can be discerned. But, in fact, discordant and heterogeneous as they may appear, they are nevertheless subjected to a certain law of association difficult as it may be frequently to discover it. The phenomenon may thus be physiologically explained. In consequence of the cerebral excitement, impressions long since made,—so long, perhaps, as to have been forgotten previous to the attack,—are so vividly and distinctly recalled that they appear to be outward realities. So long as the intellect retains its integrity, it is able to recognize the true nature of this phenomenon; but when touched by disease, it ceases to correct the error of perception."

THE CHARACTERS

King Lear. Lear himself is the chief figure of the plot. The consequences of what he does at the very outset of the play, exercise a considerable influence upon him as well as upon others, Lear is, as he reveals about himself "....a very foolish fond old man fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less." This fact must be borne in mind, as it makes one thing obvious, *viz.*, there is no scope for the development of the character. The leading features of Lear can be discerned and thereafter it may be observed with interest how a peculiar change in his life and circumstances would affect the character of this man. This transformation eventually results into Lear's insanity. E. I. Fripp observes : "He is a titanic figure, vast in his presence and authority, in the explosions of wrath and terrific vehemence of speech...his overwhelming grief and desperate yearnings, and, at last, his utter humility and sweetness. He is on a scale with the tempest which he defies, and with Supernatural Powers which cast him down,

and then raise him to a new majesty." Let us study Lear's mind, and we shall find that from first to last his mental state is one which is more or less diseased. His nature is headstrong and imperious and his mind is invested with an extraordinary vigour. The paradox of his character is that we may also discern in him an admixture of tenderness and generosity. It may be marked with sufficient interest that his rule has been despotic and those around him are inspired by fear rather than love. If this idea is accepted that Lear is nothing more than an infirm old man, whose shallow mind and feeble power of judgment pass into raving madness as a result of the iniquitous treatment he receives at the hands of his ingrate daughters, Act I of the drama would appear but a gross improbability. The moment we see his mind, in a state of unsoundness, that could be made acute merely by provocation and suffering, we are convinced of the events and hence improbability, as such, vanishes. Coleridge rightly terms Lear's trial of his daughters' love as a mere "silly trick." Dr. Bucknill observes :

"Does it not lead us to conclude that from the first the King's mind is off its balance ; that the partition of the kingdom, involving inevitable feuds and wars, is the first act of his developing insanity ; and that the manner of its partition, the mock-trial of his daughters' affection, and its tragical denouement, is the second, and but the second act of his madness ? The great mind, so vigorous in its mad ravings, with such clear insight into the heart of man that all the petty coverings of pretence are stripped off in its wild eloquence, not only is unable to distinguish between the most forced and fulsome flattery and the genuineness of deep and silent love ; it cannot even see the folly of assuming to apportion the three exact and predetermined thirds of the kingdom according to the professions made in answer to the 'silly trick', cannot even see that after giving away two-thirds, the remainder is a fixed quantity which cannot be more less according to the warmth of the professions of his youngest favourite daughter ; a confusion not unlike the account he subsequently gives of his own age—'fourscore and upwards ; not an hour more or less.... Lear's treatment of Kent ; his ready threat in reply to Ken't deferential address, which in the words of true devotion, only looks like the announcement of an expostulation ; his passionate interruptions and reproaches ; his attempted violence, checked by

Albany and Cornwall ; and finally the cruel sentence of banishment, cruelly expressed ; all these are the acts of a man in whom passion has become a disease. In the interview with France and Burgundy the seething passion is with difficulty suppressed by the rules of decorum and kindly courtesy. To Cordelia's entreaty that Lear would let the King of France know the simple truth of his displeasure, only the savage reply is given—

'Better thou
Hadst not been born, than not to have pleased me better'

and he casts out his once loved daughter—the darling of his heart, the hope of his age—without his grace, his love, his benison."

In regard to Lear's accomplishments, inner as well as outer, I cannot do better than summarize the most valuable views, described by Edmund Blunden :

"Lear is a curious student and even at his worst times can approach his torture with the calm of a Harvey : 'Then let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that makes these hearts ?' He is a lover of the English scene, and even as he points to the map he expresses it :

'With shadowy forests and with champions rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads'."

He is a reader of the classics, and seems when he mentions 'the mystery of things' to have the little of Lucretius' poem in his system, his 'thunder-bearer' and 'high-judging Jove' are of the old poets. In hunting, hawking, archery, tournament, the art of war and even football he has acquitted himself well and through his decline lights up at the thought of them. The magnificence of the English sportsman is presented in most affectionate though smiling fashion when, at the culmination of his tragedy, as he holds dead Cordelia in his arms, Lear catches at a compliment to his mastery :

Lear. I killed the slave that was a-hanging thee.

Officer. It's true, my lord, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow ?

I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion,
I would have made them skip.

'Every inch a king' he has fallen short of perfection ; but he has never fallen short of the desire for it, and under the punishment of fate and age and the wilderness he continues to 'have one part in his heart' that receives whatever may make his rule more equal, his feelings more imaginatively open to the problems of the unprivileged man. In brief, Lear is, without doubting it further, as gifted and as generous a sovereign as ever could have the title of the King of Britain ; but we should know so much without any illuminated addresses from Shakespeare.

It is a pity, that Lear blinded by his rage puts himself entirely in the power of the two daughters whose characters he has never taken the trouble to understand. The colloquy at the end of Act I, sc. i, between Goneril and Regan shows it very clearly that little good can be hoped from this arrangement. We learn later from Goneril's complaint (I, i) that things are much worse, Lear is every hour flashing "into some fresh crime or other." This is probably an exaggerated description, but Lear's conduct in the very next scene shows that there must be some ground for complaint. He condescends to language, unbecoming his rank and strikes Oswald, his daughter's steward. We perceive, at the same time, some qualities in Lear, whereby he calls for our respect. He commands the loyalty and devotion of a man like Kent. He has a sincere and honest affection for his Fool, "pretty knave," whom he not only treats with utmost tenderness but also accepts his most unpalatable gibes and sarcasms as to his folly. Besides enduring the "poor boy's" biting remarks, he remains deeply affectionate to him.':

> "Poor Fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
> That's sorry yet for thee." (III. ii. 72-3).

Lear would like his Fool to enter first in the hovel :

> "In, boy ; go first. You houseless poverty,—
> Nay, get thee in." (III. iv. 26-7).

Lear has discerned it well that since Cordelia's daparture, the Fool has pined away. Despite noticing the neglect of Goneril's attendants, he has refrained from speaking, thinking that his own jealous curiosity was to blame rather than there was a purpose of unkindness. He also reveals that his treatment of Cordelia has been preying on his mind (I. iv. 275-79).

But just when he has begun to win our respect he acts in such a way as to lose much of the ground he has gained. Goneril's conduct is bad and her language to her father passes the limits of decency, but is it such as to warrant all the terrible imprecations which he casts upon her ? (I. iv. 284-98). It is not until we find that he is conscious of the wrong he has done Cordelia. "I did her wrong"—(I. v. 24), and that we see him first kneeling to Regan for "raiment, bed, and food" (II. iv. 155-57), then placed between the two iniquitous ingrate daughters and tossed like a shuttlecock from one to other with insult and disdain, while wave after wave of passion sweeps over his soul, that he at length wins us wholly to his side.

Lear, as a result of this most cruel treatment of his daughters, rushes out into the tumultuous storm, crying, "I shall go mad" (II. iv. 288). He has no other companion than his faithful Fool. He hurls defiance against the pudder of the elements and here he becomes really great, a grand tragic figure, "every inch a king." For the first time now, Lear, "very passionate, irritable and exacting old man," takes stock of the past, and reflects upon the multitudinous problems of life and justice, his regret for having not done so in the days of his prosperity. He ponders persistently, his mind trembling on the verge of insanity, on human weakness and suffering, and learns from his own sorrows to be in communion with the poor houseless wretches. The struggle and the strain of contending emotions prove too much for his mind, enfeebled by old age and passion long uncurbed. At the moment, when some relie is offered to him, he becomes altogether insane.

Lear, from this time onward, is scarcely better than a lay figure. Again we see him, in progress of recovery, nonetheless harping on worldly wrong and injustice (IV. vi. 158—75). He recovers, but merely to be a shadow of himself, a helpless old man clinging desperately to his daughter, whom he had denounced, but who loves and cherishes him in spite of all that. His only ambition is to live with Cordelia and be contented to remain even in a prison, knowing as he does that "upon such sacrifices the gods themselves throw incense." But when Cordelia departs from the world, wherefore should he live any more ? His spirit flutters but in the cage of fleshy tabernacle. The only prop, that supports his life, is gone and he follows her to where "the rest is silence."

A comprehensive account of Lear's character, however, shall remain incomplete, without the inclusion of the X-ray of his mind, performed by Hudson : "In the transition of Lear's mind from its first stillness and repose to its subsequent tempest and storm ; in the hurried revulsions and alternations of feeling,—the fast-rooted faith in filial virtue, the keen sensibility to filial ingratitude, the mighty hunger of the heart, thrice repelled, yet ever strengthened by repulse ; and in the turning up of sentiments and faculties deeply imbedded beneath the incrustations of time and place ;—in all this we have a retrospect of the aged sufferer's whole life ; the abridged history of a mind that has passed through many successive stages, each putting off the form, yet retaining and perfecting the grace of the proceeding...."

Cordelia. Cordelia is one of the noblest heroines of Shakespeare. She is incessantly kept before the mind of the audience, and her spirit seems to influence the entire tragedy. The impression left by her is one of a guardian angel of the play haunting our minds. Schlegel finds himself somewhat diffident :* "Of the heavenly beauty of soul of Cordelia, pronounced in so few words, I will not venture to speak." Cordelia's part in the play is but slight. It is only four times that she appears and hardly speaks a hundred lines together. In this reticence, I incline to think, lies the beauty and grandeur of her character, of whose paradox reveals her silence to be much more eloquent. Bradley observes : "The character of Cordelia is not a masterpiece of invention or subtlety like that of Cleopatra ; yet in its own way it is a creation as wonderful. Cordelia appears in only four of the twenty-six scenes of 'King Lear' ; she speaks—it is hard to believe it—scarcely more than a hundred lines ; and yet no character in Shakespeare is more absolutely individual or more inaffaceably stamped on the memory of his readers......I am obliged to speak of her chiefly because the devotion she inspires almost inevitably obscures her part in the tragedy. This devotion is composed of two contrary elements, reverence and pity. The first, because Cordelia's is a higher nature than that of most even of Shakespeare's heroines. With the tenderness of

*"Lectures on Dramatic Art" etc., 1808, Trans. by J. Black, ii, 204, London, 1815.

Viola Desdemona she unites something of the resolution, power, and dignity of Hermione, and reminds us sometimes of Helena, sometimes of Isabella, though she has none of the traits which prevent Isabella from winning our hearts."

Though Cordelia is little seen and less heard, yet she, by the impression left by her, is ubiquitous. To present Cordelia as a meek saint would be a serious mistake. She has in her, more than a touch of her father. With all her sweetness and youthful elegance, she is as obstinate and as proud as her imperious father. In her juvenile fervour, "she answers uncalculatingly with pride to his pride, even as later she answers with pity to his misery." According to Granville Barker, to miss this likeness between the two is to miss Shakespeare's first important dramatic effect ; the mighty old man and the frail child, confronted, and each unyielding :

"So young and so untender ?
So young, my Lord, and true."

Kent, who is evidently of her temper, seems to ask pity for her, but his chief concern is to warn the hot and hasty Lear against his own folly and the consequences thereof. His aim is to emphasize as well as applaud her strength of mind :

"The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
That justly think'st and hast most rightly said."
—(I. i. 182-3).

She vindicates her case. The integrity of her nature is linked with her innate dignity. She has no traffic with bargaining Burgundy, to whom she replies with an acid sharpness, when her self-respect is put to defiance :

"Peace be with Burgundy !
Since that respect and fortune are his love,
I shall not be his wife."

With respect, applause and delight, does France accept her :

"Fairest Cordelia, that are most rich, being poor ;
Most choice, foresaken ; and most lov'd, despis'd !
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon :
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away."

Now not even all the dukes of "Wat'rish Burgundy" can purchase "this unpriz'd precious maid" of him. She does voice her feelings but who would care to listen this 'still small voice' in the midst of turmoil and non-committal growl" of Lear:

"The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes
Cordelia leaves you......
Love well our father ;
To your professed bosoms I commit him ;
But yet, alas ! stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place."

Candidness and reticence are excellently blended in her. That 'glib and oily of flattery' is something extraneous to her nature. She is infact rich for the very want of it. Is it not the magnetic charm of a loving heart—of which she has too much to 'heave into words'—that makes the Fool pine away in her absence ? What makes Kent, clamped, with 'cruel garters' peruse her letter, as if it were a page of the scripture ?—

"Approach, thou beacon to this under-globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter." (II. ii. 163-65)."

By 'beacon' Kent means 'heavenly benediction', the writer of that letter to him being a part of it. What is it that evokes from Gentleman (Kent's messenger) the most beautiful and rapturous description of her ?—

"........patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once ; her smiles and tears
Were like a better way ; those happy smiles
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes ; which parted thence
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd." (IV. iii. 17-23).

In the Reconciliation Scene, the unfathomed depths of her ineffably noble nature are revealed to us. Her compassion, like that of Miranda and Desdemona, seems to embrace all suffering :

"Mine enemy's dog
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire."

How terrific indeed is to watch "poor perdu" with his 'thin helm' opposed against "the deep dread-bolted thunder" and "the warring winds!"

Hudson observes : "Formed for all sympathies, moved by all tenderness, prompt for all duty, prepared for all suffering,

we seem almost to hear her sighs and feel her breath as she hangs like a ministering spirit over her reviving father."

What she speaks to her father is still insufficient. Presumably, she does not find speech itself simple or genuine enough for the expression of her deep heart. "A virgin delinquency in genuine and deep feeling" makes her shrink from verbal protestations. Love's "best eloquence is when it disables speech." It goes against her very nature to profane her feelings with exhuberance of words. Her reply may be marked to Lear's "you have some cause, they have not."—"No cause, no cause."

It seems neither good fortune nor ill can stick to Cordelia herself ; this is at once her strength and infirmity both. She says :

"For thee, oppressed King, am I cast down ;
Myself could else outfrown false fortune's frown."

We are sure she could do so. Thereafter she falls into dumbness—into such a dumbness as was her first undoing—and passes, quiet, from our sight. No more could the voice that was "ever soit, gentle and low" be heard. To sum up in Mrs. Jameson's words :* "Amid the pictures of moral and physical wretchedness which harrow up the soul, the tender influence of Cordelia, like that of a celestial visitant, is felt and acknowledged without being understood. Like a soft star that shines for a moment from behind a stormy cloud and the next is swallowed up in tempest and darkness, the impression it leaves is beautiful and deep but vague."

Goneril and Regan. The two unnatural daughters appear to us no less than personifications of cruelty and ingratitude. Whenever they appear on the stage, "pure horror" reigns, as from the presence of "Gorgons, and Haydras and Chimaeras dire." Coleridge notes that Goneril and Regan do not appear often, so that the peculiar effect of horror which they produce is not mitigated, as it might be, by familiarity ; and that when they are present, "not a sentiment, not an image, which can give pleasure on its own account, is admitted."

The twin monsters, however, can be differentiated. Goneril is the stronger and more masculine spirit, while Regan is of a

*"Characteristics of Women," Second ed. 1833, ii. 88.

more feminine bearing. It is Goneril, who originates the joint plan of action by herself and Regan against Lear :

"The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash ; then must we look from his age to receive not alone the imperfection of long-engraffed condition, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them." (I. i. 295-99).

Goneril shows herself able to design as well as to carry out a resolute course of action. Regan's eyes do not have "the fierce burning light" of Goneril's—in fact, their expression seems generous : Lear says about her :

"No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse :
The tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness : her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort and not burn." (II. iv. 172-5).

While Cordelia is the personifiation of filial love, Goneril and Regan typify filial ingratitude. Goneril rules her mild and docile husband, Albany :

"Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken : I know his heart."
(I. iv. 339-40).

She despises him :

"........I marvel our mild husband
Not met us on the way." (IV. ii. 1-2).

She acts on her own initiative, without consulting him and hardly condescends to his remonstrances :

"*Albany*......whereof comes this ?
Gon. Never afflict yourself know more of it."
(I. iv. 299-300).

She openly defies her husband, and calls him a "Milk-liver'd man" (IV. ii. 50-59). She has no hesitation in the path she has chosen for herself. She listens to Lear's imprecations unmoved (I. iv 284-98), and follows him to her sister, being apprehensive of an infirmity on the latter's part, so as to counteract it by her presence. It is Goneril, who is resolute in keeping Lear out in the storm :

"'Tis his own blame ; hath put himself from rest,
And must needs taste his folly."
(II. iv. 292-3).

To Gloucester she asks to "entreat him by no means to stay." No less hideous and unnatural than her treatment of the old King, is her adulterous passion for Edmund. The moment she conceives a passionate love for Gloucester's illegitimate son, her wits are set to work to remove the obstacle of Albany's existence. The news of Cornwall's death at first alarms her. She is suspicious and apprehensive lest Regan, now being free, should feel the same passion as herself. She begins to ponder over the new prospect, how to get rid of Albany and Regan, so that the entire kingdom might be governed by Edmund and Goneril. She administers poison on Regan and leaves it till after the battle to dispose of Albany. This adulterous love for Edmund brings nemesis in its train. Her plans are exposed, as a consequence of which she ruthlessly takes away her own life.

Regan is more submissive and less iniquitous than Goneril, nonetheless she is equally venomous and spiteful. She turns cruel even more than her husband, Cornwall, that bloody wolf. In the midst of scuffling., she does not forget to tell Gloucester that his own son has betrayed him, and even as he faces her, blinded and bleeding, she sneers and jeers at him. She readily joins in Goneril's design, but she does not seem quite equal to the task of playing her part. She shrinks from Lear's curse :

"O the blest gods ! so will you wish on me
When the rash mood is on." (II. iv. 170-1).

She tries to make some excuse for shutting Lear out in the storm :

"This house is little : the old man and his people
Cannot be well bestow'd." (II. iv. 290).

She, reassured by Goneril, becomes even more iniquitous than her elder sister. It is Regan, who says in a final stroke : "What need one ?"

Though Regan appears to have a gentler and more attractive a countenance than the more resolute Goneril, she delights in cruelty for cruelty's sake. While Goneril suggests the putting out of Gloucester's eyes, Regan is present at the act itself, plucking the beard of the old Earl and encouraging Cornwall :

"One side will mock another ; th' other too."
(III. vii. 70).

It is with an exultation that she informs Gloucester of the treachery of Edmund. The spirit that is shown by her in slaying the servant, who has wounded her husband, would be admirable but only under other circumstances.

As for strength of purpose, Regan is inferior to her sister. Though she suspects an intimacy in between Edmund and Goneril, she never thinks of taking concrete steps against her sister. But perhaps she reposes her trust in Edmund. Goneril by her very nature acts at once, without trusting anybody. Dowden distinguishes these two sisters from each other thus :* "Goneril is the calm wielder of a pitiless force, the resolute initiater of cruelty. Regan is a smaller, shriller, fiercer, more eager piece of malice. The tyranny of the elder sister is a cold, persistent pressure, as little affected by tenderness or scruple as the action of some crushing hammer ; Regan's ferocity is more unmeasured, and less abnormal or monstrous .... When, after Lear's terrible malediction, he rides away with his train, Goneril, who would bring things to an issue, pursues her father, determined to see matters out to the end. To complete the horror they produce in us, these monsters are amorous. Their love is even more hideous than their hate. The wars of—

'Dragons of the prime
That tare each other in their slime'

formed a spectacle less prodigious than their mutual blandishments and caresses. To the last Goneril is true to her character. Regan is despatched out of life by her sister ; Goneril thrusts her own life aside, and boldly enters the great darkness of the grave."

Kent. Kent is the most striking example of "a pure unmingled fidelity." He is hot-headed, rash and impetuous, nonetheless he is loyal to the heart's core and is unhesitatingly prepared to defend the right. Despite the acrimonious treatment he has received from his master, Lear, his devotion to him is unswerving, untiring, and regardless of the misfortunes he may bring upon himself :

"Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,

*"Shakespeare: His Mind and Art," pp. 263-4.

As my great patron thought on in my prayers."
(I. i. 139-42).

In these words vibrates the dominant chord of his *life* ! Dreaming or waking, his thoughts revolve round the safety and prosperity of Lear :

"My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thine enemies ; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being motive."

None but a brave man like him would have ventured to come "between the dragon and his wrath." Persistently and resolutely did he stand in opposition to the despotic will and power of the imperious Lear.

At times, we find him injudicious in his methods, with Lear (I. i) and Cornwall (II. ii).

He unnecessarily becomes violent and harms rather than serves the cause he has espoused. As for his loyalty and devotion to Lear, he crosses all the limits, and in disguise "follows his enemy king and does him service improper for a slave." His championship of Cordelia makes it abundantly clear that once having determined to follow the fortunes of the unhappy king, he will do so through thick and thin. Whatever sacrifices, that could be demanded of him, he would be glad enough to pay, being apathetic to the strokes of adversity and knowing it well that "a good man's fortune may grow out at heels". In the midst of misfortunes, his great qualities stand out all the more strongly. Deighton observes : "He displays not only a rare fidelity but large resource, wisdom, and foresight. His equanimity under the insults put upon him by Regan is unruffled, amid the sufferings, which he shares with his master, his cheerfulness abates no whit ; while the tender care with which he watches over Lear, is what we perhaps might not have expected from one so blunt of speech and impetuous of manner :

'O thou good Kent, how shall I live and work
To match thy goodness ? My life will be too short
And every measure fail me'

are Cordelia's words of no exaggerated acknowledgment, and are uttered by one who justly says of herself :

'. . . .what I well intend
I'll do 't before I speak.'

And when all his sacrifice of love is fruitless, when he, for whom it has so cheerfully been made, is unable to profit by it, or even to recognize to whom he owes such loyal tendance, but passes away, his mind still clouded with its sad disease and his heart broken by the last awful blow of Cordelia's death, for Kent there is no further tie to earth, no other hope but that of following his master elsewhere as here. To Albany's entreaty that he will share with Edgar the government of the realm, his answer is,

'I have a journey, sir, shortly to go ;
My master calls me, I must not say no'."

Edgar. Edgar's character, in some respects, is as grand as that of Kent, though scarcely as unselfish and lovable. At the very outset, we get impatient at the readiness with which he falls a dupe to Edmund's scheme, and feels like accusing him for his being so easily entrapped. His readiness to accept Edmund's story of his father's ill-will towards him, withourt the least thought of ascertaining from his father the grounds of his distrust, is something strange to us. Edmund describes him as one,

'Whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none.'

Advised by Edmund, he avoids the presence of his father and thereafter is persuaded to take a step in itself so suspicious as that of fleeing from home instead of facing enquiry. Pesumably he is well aware of his father's credulousness and finds it impossible to establish his innocence in the teeth of such a vicious plot against him as that at which Edmund has hinted. We can perceive that he falls a victim, above all to his own open and unsuspicious nature. That he, under the stress of misfortune, shows remarkable strength of character and resource, makes him laudable. In his character do we find a successful blending of stoicism, resourcefulness, humanity and good humour. Gervinus observes :* "To play the part of Edgar requires a man to be 'every inch an actor'. He changes at least six different times. At first he is Edgar ; then Poor Tom ; then, forgetting this part in his devotion to his father, he loses sight of it ; then he describes the immeasurable depths of the pretended cliff, as if he himself

* "Shakespeare" 1849, Fourth edition, ii. 205.

stood dizzily upon it ; next he is the dweller on the shore, where Gloucester thinks he has fallen ; then, after the meeting of his father with Lear he is another beggar, and, in the presence of the steward, he is changed into a peasant ; in the lists with Edmund he is an unknown champion, and last, he is himself again."

Edgar plays the part of Bedlam beggar, exercising all the patience, tenderness and tact, and a strangely pathetic power seems to prevent the impersonation from derogating into absurdity. We at once perceive how through his wild utterances in that character runs the same under-current of worldly wisdom, which is significant of Lear's utterances on humanity and the babblings of the Fool. Later we find him playing successfully several other parts and thereby keeping his identity from his own father. What is remarkable is that through all the vicissitudes never even for a moment does he find himself frustrated or cast down, but "stands still in esperance, "lives not in fear." His defiance of his treacherous brother, Edmund, is noble, but still more noble does he become in his charity and forgiveness to his fallen foe. Unlike the views of his father, his own are self-righteous :

"The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices,
Make instruments to plague us."

Anybody, who sees him, can easily discern a "royal nobleness" of bearing as well as of character in him. His reserve at the very beginning can give him a stamp of distinction. The notion of that strange disguise would come but not to a commonplace man. Through the ravings of poor Tom, we see his pitiful heart. To our great joy mixed with surprise, we come face to face with Edgar the philosopher in his soliloquies in III. vi. 105-10 :

"When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers, suffers most i' th' mind,
Leaving free things and happy shows behind :
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
When grief hath mates and bearing fellowship:"

and IV. i. 1-9 which reveals to us that when a man divests himself of his real character, he feels no pain from contempt, because he supposes it incurred only by a voluntary disguise which he can throw off at pleasure the moment he inclines

to do so. It is quite obvious that his philosophy of indifference to fortune, of patience with life itself, of the good comfort of fellowship dominates the play.* He tells his father :

"Bear free and patient thoughts"

and

"Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither :
Ripeness is all." (V. ii. 9-11).

We take in us the lofty ideal of philosophy that "to philosophize is to learn how to die." Our readiness to death, that is all need to learn.

Gloucester. Gloucester may well be considered as one of the chief men of the kingdom in the play. The opening scene makes it apparent that he occupies an important place at Lear's court (I. i. 34). He is also connected with Cornwall in some way, and addresses him as his "worthy arch and patron," and at times he is apprehensive of him. His dignity is enhanced in his support to Cornwall, who visits his castle mainly to avoid receiving Lear at his own palace. Granville-Barker says : "Gloucester and his sons are opposite numbers, as the phrase now goes, to Lear and his daughters. Gloucester himself is the play's nearest approach to the average sensual man. The civilized world is full of Gloucesters. In half a dozen short speeches, Shakespeare sets him fully before us : turning elderly but probably still handsome ; nice of speech if a little pompous ; the accomplished courtier (he seems to be Lear's master of ceremonies) ; vain, as his mock modesty shows, but the joking shamelessness that succeeds it is mainly swagger ; an egotist, and blind, knowing least of what he should know most, of his own two sons—

'He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again.' That carelessly jovial sentence of banishment for Edmund proves his own death-sentence."

On the whole, the Earl seems to be an easy-going, well-intentioned man, without an outstanding ability. His temper must be changeable and subject to violent fits of passion. If it were not so, then why should Edgar so readily accept Edmund's story in I. ii. 162-77. His highly superstitious nature is revealed in I. ii. 107—14 :

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* See Granville-Barker : "Prefaces to Shakespeare," ed. 1958, p. 320.

"These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us : though the wisdom of Nature can reason it thus, yet Nature finds itself scourg'd by the sequent effects : love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide : in cities, mutinies ; in countries, discord ; in palaces, treason ; and the bond crack'd 'twixt son and father."

A high degree of credibility persuades him to believe even the most improbable lies. His foolish conduct towards Edgar and his attitude towards Lear and his daughters are testimony to his weakness. His early life has been loose and immoral, nonetheless, he being "so braz'd to it", has no compunction whatsoever. According to Goggin, "He reaps, in his old age, the whirlwind he has sown in youth, and the son, who is the result of his sin, becomes the instrument of his punishment." As a matter of fact he sees nothing in his past life which merits the chastisement. For his ill-treatment and sufferings, he accuses gods :

"As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods;
They kill us for their sport." (IV. i. 36-37).

He does not face the calamities stoically, but at once seeks relief in self-destruction :

"No further, sir ; a man may rot even here."
(V. ii. 8).

Edgar endeavours to teach him :

"....Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither"

but "his flaw'd heart", being no longer able to resist :

"Alack, too weak the conflict to support !
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly." (V. ii.. 197-99).

Edmund. Endowed with an attractive and pleasing countenance and a clear, commanding crafty intelligence, Edmund at the very outset stands on a vantage ground so as to make his career an honourable and creditable one. He is the son of a noble father, and is brave and young. Like Iago he is conscious of his powers and is bent upon defrauding "legitimate Edgar" of his land and wipe out the stigma that attaches to him as an illegitimate:

"....Edmund the base
Shall top th' legitimate— : I grow, I prosper ;
Now, gods, stand up for bastards." (I. ii. 20-22).

His is a soaring ambition. Merely his father's title and lands will not satisfy him, as Fortune reveals to him higher chances—the crown of England. He is unscrupulous and least vulnerable to the moral consideration. Nature is his goddess. Like a hunter he studies the habits of men and women to meet his own ends :

"A credulous father, and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms,
That he suspects none."

Shakespeare puts a rather powerful passage in his mouth, which is in fact a scathing sarcasm on the stupidity of believing the supernatural influence as a guide to human destiny so as to shape the activities of men and women :

"This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune,—often the surfeit of our own behaviour, —we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars ; as if we were villains by necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and treacherous by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforc'd obedience of planetary influênce ; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on." (I. ii. 124-31).

By this nature he is inherently evil. The circumstances of his birth and education have fostered and stengthened his evil tendencies. An illegitimate son, as he is, brought up abroad at a distance from his father and brother, he has no knowledge, whatsoever, of paternal or family affection. We find him standing in the plague of custom—a social outcast, singeing to take vengeance upon the atrocious world for the wrong it has done him. It is in his habit to take the fullest advantage of every little opportunity offered to him. (V. iii. 20-23). He is not in the least prepared to stick to an infamy (V. i. 66-67, iii. 27-30). He is brave and dauntless of danger, and in the battle with the French army shows himself a skilful general. Albany speaks of him :

"Sir, you have shown today your valiant strain,
And fortune led you well." (V. iii. 41-42).

When Goneril and Regan, with an adulterous passion, compete for his hand, he coolly calculates as to which of the two would better suit his purpose. He would prefer Regan, but that might exasperate Goneril. Let one of them be driven off from the picture, for he knows it pretty well :

"Neither can be enjoyed
If both remain alive." (V. ii. 58-9).

Even in his last moments, he reveals no sign of repentance. Having lost his game after all, he proposes to make the best of a bad bargain so that his life might appear to be less hideous. The two brothers "exchange charity" and Edmund says :

"The wheel is come full circle ; I am here." (V. iii. 174).

Proximity of death brings to the surface some microscopic humanness, hidden somewhere in him :

"I pant for life ; some good I meant to do
Despite of my own nature." (V. iii. 243-4).

The trace of noble nature is but hard to be found in him. To Edgar he speaks :

"But what art thou—
Thou hast this fortune on me ? If thou art noble,
I do forgive thee." (V. iii. 164-6).

His melancholy satisfaction at once becomes ironical :

"Yet Edmund was beloved :
The one the other poison'd for my sake
And after slew herself"

That which ultimately proves his undoing is his own insatiable ambition. A cynical unbeliever and a devotee to the goddess of Nature, he determines to climb to power by the ruin of his noble and innocent brother. His father being credulous, "his practices ride easy" and the obstacles are removed. He gains title and power by the ruin of his own father. Death of Cornwall enables him to aspire to Regan and with her the half of the entire kingdom. Is that enough ? Nay, the prospect of the whole kingdom with Goneril—that is his new ambitious temptation (V. i. 55-69). The last intrigue proves to be his debacle : as

"Striving to better oft we mar what is well."

Nemesis is brought upon him by the brother and father whom he has wronged. Oswald is slain by Edgar in defence of Gloucester, and thereby Edgar discovers the conspiracy against "the death-practis'd duke". With this knowledge, Edgar finds an access to Albany and avails of the chance to encounter Edmund just before the latter is able to crown his ambitious designs with success.

Cornwall and Albany. Shakespeare has carefully contrasted the two dukes like their wives. Cornwall is a man of fiery temper, "whose disposition, all the world well knows, will not be rubb'd or stopp'd." Besides being violent and iniquitous, he is positively ferocious, implacable and callous to suffering. He unscrupulously avails himself of Edmund's treacherous designs. That he does disapprove Edmund's unnatural conduct (III. v.) is but a testimony to the business of his character. It may be said that he is old enough even in the prime of life, as he speaks to Edmund :

"I will lay trust upon thee ; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love."

The cynical humour, with which he appraises Kent shows that he is by no means stupid. He asserts himself (though not vigorously) against his wife, as Albany does not. In his vindictiveness, he still keeps his head :*

"Go seek the traitor Gloucester,
Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us
Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice, yet our power
Shall do a court'sy to our wrath, which men
May blame but not control."

He is hardly lovable. He enjoys Gloucester's blinding, as with a savage jest, he sets about it. "The taste of blood seems to let loose all the wild beast in him, and, like a wild beast, Shakespeare has him dispatched."

Albany is a mild and a "milk-liver'd man, that bearest a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs", according to his wife, Goneril. He disapproves of Goneril's conduct to Lear, but his remonstrances remain only half-hearted :

"Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this ?

to which Goneril retorts :

'Never afflict yourself to know more of it."

A little later he asserts :

"I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you,—"

to which Goneril precisely says :

"Pray you, content."

Later on, when the tidings of the wrongs perpetrated on

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*Granville-Barker.

that terrible night in Gloucester's castle, reach him, they awaken in him an unsuspected strength of character. Now, he is certainly no longer one bearing "a cheek for blows." He openly shows his disapproval of Goneril and vows vengeance on the persecutors of Gloucester and those of Lear :

"Gloucester, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'dst the king,
And to revenge thine eyes."

At the opportune moment, we find him asserting himself with dignity and distinction :

"Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason ; and in thine attaint,
This gilded serpent."

Whatever he speaks, reveals a spirit of decision and self-command in the dealings. He is generous and considerate towards Kent and Edgar :

"Friends of my soul, you twain
Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain."

Why does Albany not fight on the side of Lear and Cordelia? Presumably, Shakespeare's Elizabethan patriotism prevented him from showing Albany as one deserting to the ranks of enemy.

Oswald. This "serviceable villain" may rightly be considered as an "exact antithesis of Kent." Kent is loyal to Lear, similarly Oswald is loyal to Goneril, his mistress. Except this the two are altogether different from each other. Coleridge has the following note : "Goneril authorizes the Steward to be rude to Lear......The Steward (as a contrast to Kent) is the only character of utter unredeemable baseness in Shakespeare. Observe even in this the judgment and invention. What could the willing tool of a Goneril be ? Not a vice but this of baseness was left open to him."

He has been described by Granville-Barker as a "newfangled fellow, neither gentleman nor plain servant, mimicking the manners of the one, doing dirtier work than the other." "Kent sizes him up when he dresses him down", observes the learned critic further, "with enjoyable completeness ; so does Lear, later, in a dozen words :

'This is a slave, whose easy-borrowed pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows'."

So does Edgar, having rid the world of him, as

"a serviceable villain ;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire."

Oswalds have existed in every age and been good game for abuse, but the London of Shakespeare's day had evidently produced an unusually fine crop of them."

The Fool. It may be noticed that the Fool greatly differs from the clowns of the comedies. The clowns of the comedies are introduced with a view to heighten the fun and their parts are rarely essential to the action. But in "King Lear" the Fool is essentially necessary to the action. It is not an exaggeration to say that without the Fool, much of the meaning of the play as well as much of its greatness would be lost. It is indeed right to call him "the tenderest of jesters." He plays a very significant part in the tragedy. Mainly he helps in relieving the tragic intensity by the flashes of his wit and humour. We also find him acting as King's conscience. He frequently reminds Lear of the folly of his conduct and this he seems to do, by using his folly like a "stalking-horse, under the presentation of which he shoots his wit". Resentment at his master's wrongs makes him careless of his own safety, and he scruples nothing to face the anger of one from whom he need expect no forbearance. While he accompanies Lear in his weary pursuit of Regan, we find him persistently endeavouring to soothe his sorrows by a display of pungent humour, that springs from a heart wholly wrung with sympathy. In the storm scenes the Fool is no longer a sharp reminder of Lear's follies, for we find him now labouring "to out-jest his heart-struck injuries". But is he successful in doing so ? He is but helpless, when Lear is thoroughly mad and sinks to sleep through exhaustion. The Fool has played his part and so disappears from the action :

"And I'll go to bed at noon."

And this is the last we hear or see of him. What happens to him thereafter is not known by us. According to Granville-Barker, "To pursue the Fool beyond the play's bounds, to steep him in extraneous sentiment, is to miss the most characteristically dramatic thing above him." He further observes ; "The soliloquy with which Act III, scene ii, is made to end is certainly spurious. Its own incongruity can be left out of the question ; its offence against the dramatic situation dis-

allows it. The very heart of this is Lear's newfound care for the shivering drenched creature at his side :

> 'Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy ? Art cold ?
> Poor fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
> That's sorry yet for thee."

Several critics are of the opinion that the Fool may be taken as a middle-aged man. But to consider him a youth is quite compatible with the general tone of the character. Lear addresses him "my pretty knave" and "my boy". The Fool is apprehensive of Goneril, and does not dare speak when she appears :

> "Yes, for sooth, I will hold my tongue ; so your face bids me, though you say nothing."

He is reticent all through the scene with Goneril and Regan (II. iv.) He is afraid of the Badlam beggar at the time of entering into the hut, and runs out shrieking for help :

> "Come not in here, Nuncle ; here's a spirit.
> Help me ! help me !"

At this Kent takes him by the hand and cares to see that he is not left behind in the hut.

It may also be marked that his folly is not entirely professional, as he evidently suffers from some sort of mental derangement and for that reason cannot be held responsible for his own words and actions. Goggin thinks that if he were merely a professional jester, his remarks in Act III, Scenes iv and vi, would be positively unfeeling, and would convert the tragedy into comedy. Affectionate and gentle is the nature of the Fool and he pines away after Cordelia's departure and clings with devotion to his master. Hudson, with a keen insight, says of the Fool :* "I know not. . how I can better describe the Fool than as the soul of pathos in a sort of comic masquerade ; one in whom fun and frolic are sublimed and idealized into tragic beauty ; with the garments of mourning showing through and softened by the lawn of playfulness. His 'labouring to Lear's heart-struck injuries' tells us that his wits are set a-dancing by grief ; that his jests bubble up from the depths of a heart struggling with pity and sorrow, as foam enwreathes the face of deeply-troubled waters." The learned critic adds :

"Our estimate of this drama, as a whole, depends very

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* "Tragedy of King Lear," Boston, 1879.

much on the view we take of the Fool ; that is, on how we interpret his part, or in what sense we understand it......He has no suffering of his own to move us, yet, rightly seen, he does move us, and deeply too. But the process of his interest is very peculiar and recondite. The most noteworthy point in him, and the real key to his character, lies in that, while his heart is slowly breaking, he never speaks, nor even appears so much as to think, of his own suffering. He seems, indeed, quite unconscious of it. His anguish is purely the anguish of sympathy ; a sympathy so deep and intense as to induce absolute forgetfulness of self ; all his capacities of feeling being perfectly engrossed with the suffering of those whom he loves. He withdraws from the scene with the words, 'And I'll go to bed at noon,' which means simply that the dear fellow is dying, and this, too, purely of others' sorrows, which he feels more keenly than they do themselves. She who was the light of his eyes is gone, dowered with her father's curse and strangered with his oath ; Kent and Edgar have vanished from his recognition, he knows not whither, the victims of wrong and crime ; the wicked seem to be having all things their own way ; the elements have joined their persecution to the cruelties of men ; there is no pity in the Heavens, no help from the earth ; he sees nothing but a 'world's convention of agonies' before him ; and his straining of mind to play assuagement upon others' woes has fairly breached the citadel of his life. But the deepest grief of all has now overtaken him ; his old master's wits all shattered in pieces ; to prevent this, he has all along been toiling his forces to the utmost ; and, now that it has come in spite of him, he no longer has anything to live for : yet he must still mask his passion in a characteristic disguise, and breathe out his life in a play of thought."

OPINIONS OF CRITICS

Florence O' Brien—

This play resembles a stormy night. The first scene is like a wild sunset, grand and awful, with gusts of wind and mutterings of thunder, presaging the coming storm. Then comes a furious tempest of crime and madness, through which we see dimly the monstrous and unnatural form of Goneril and Regan, Cornwall and Edmund, and hear ever and anon the wild laugh of the Fool, the mad howls of Lear, and the

low moan of the blind Gloucester, while afar off a ray of moonlight breaks through the clouds, and throws its silvery radiance on the queenly figure of Cordelia standing calm and peaceful in the storm, like an angel of truth and purity amid the raging strife of a sinful and blood-stained world. At the last, one great thunder-clap of death : the tempest ceases, and the guilty alike whelmed in the blind rage of Fate.

Hazlitt—

It has been said, and, we think, justly, that the third Act of "Othello" and the first three Acts of "Lear" are Shakespeare's great masterpieces in the logic of passion ; that they contain the highest examples, not only of the force of individual passion but of dramatic vicissitudes and striking effects arising from the different circumstances and characters of the persons speaking. We see the ebb and flow of the feeling, its pauses and feverish starts, its impatience of opposition, its accumulating force when it has time to recollect itself, the manner in which it avails itself of every passing word or gesture, its haste to repel insinuation, the alternate contraction and dilation of the soul, and all 'dazzling fence of controversy,' in this mortal combat with poisoned weapons aimed at the heart, where each wound is fatal. We see in "Othello" how the unsuspecting frankness and impetuous passions of the Moor are preyed upon and exasperated by the artful dexterity of Iago. In the present play, that which aggravates the sense of sympathy in the reader, and of uncontrollable anguish in the swollen heart of Lear, is the petrifying indifference, the cold, calculating, obdurate selfishness of his daughters. His keen passion seems whetted on their stony hearts. The contrast would be too painful, the shock too great, but for the intervention of the Fool, whose well-timed levity comes in to break the continuity of feeling when it can no longer be borne, and to bring into play again the fibres of the heart just as they are growing rigid from over-strained excitement. The imagination is glad to take refuge in the half-comic, half-serious comments of the Fool, just as the mind, under the extreme anguish of a surgical operation, vents itself in sallies of wit. The character was also a grotesque ornament of the barbarous times in which alone the tragic groundwork of the story could be laid. In another point of view it is indispensable, inasmuch as while it is a diversion to the too great intensity of our disgust, it carries the pathos to

the highest point of which it is capable, by showing the pitiable weakness of the old king's conduct and its irretrievable consequences, in the most familiar point of view. Lear may well 'beat the gate which let his folly in', after, as the Fool says, 'he made his daughters his mothers....'

Shakespeare's mastery over his subject, if it was not art, was owing to a knowledge of the connecting links of the passions and their effect upon the mind, still more wonderful than any systematic adherence to rules, and that anticipated and outdid all the efforts of the most refined art, not inspired and tendered instinctive by genius....

Four things have struck us in reading "Lear" :

(*i*) That poetry is an interesting study, for this reason, that it relates to whatever is most interesting in human life. Whoever, therefore, has a contempt for poetry, has a contempt for himself and humanity.

(*ii*) That the language of poetry is superior to the language of painting, because the strongest of our recollections relate to feelings, not to faces.

(*iii*) That the greatest strength of genius is shown in describing the strongest passions ; for the power of the imagination, in words of invention, must be in proportion to the force of the natural impressions which are the subject of them.

(*iv*) That the circumstance which balances the pleasure against the pain in tragedy is, that in proportion to the greatness of the evil, is our sense and desire of the opposite good excited ; and that our sympathy with actual suffering is lost in the strong impulse given to our natural affections, and carried away with the swelling tide of passion that gushes from and relieves the heart.

Charles Lamb—

So to see Lear acted—, to see an old man tottering about the stage with a walking-stick, turned out of doors by his daughters in a rainy night—has nothing in it but what is painful and disgusting. We want to take him into shelter and relieve him. That is all the feeling which the acting of Lear ever produced in me. But the Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted. The contemptible machinery by which they mimic the storm which he goes out in, is not more inadequate to represent the horrors of the real elements than any actor can be to

represent Lear ; they might more easily propose to personate the Satan of Milton upon a stage, or one of Michael Angelo's terrible figures. The greatness of Lear is not in corporal dimension, but in intellectual : the explosions of his passion are terrible as a volcano : they are storms turning up and disclosing to the bottom that sea, his mind, with all its vast niches. It is his mind which is laid bare. This case of flesh and blood seems too insignificant to be thought on ; even as he himself neglects it. On the stage we see nothing but corporal infirmities and weaknesses, the impotence of rage; while we read it, we see not Lear, but we are Lear—we are sustained by a grandeur which baffles the malice of daughters and storms ; in the aberrations of his reason we discover a mighty irregular power of reasoning, immethodsed from the ordinary purposes of life but exerting its powers, as the wind blows where it listeth, at will upon the corruptions and abuses of mankind. What have looks, or tones, to do with that sublime identification of his age with that of the 'heavens themselves', when in his reproaches to them for conniving at the injustice of his children, he reminds them that 'they themselves are old' ? What gesture shall we appropriate to this? What has the voice or the eye to do with such things ? But the play is beyond all art, as the tamperings with it show ; it is too hard and stony ; it must have love-scenes and a happy ending. It is not enough that Cordelia is a daughter, she must shine as a lover too. Tate has put his hook into the nostrils of this Leviathan, for Garrick and his followers, the showmen of the scene, to draw the mighty beast about more easily. A happy ending !—as if the living martyrdom that Lear had gone through—the flayings of his feelings alive did not make a fair dismissal from the stage of life the only decorus thing for him. If he is to live and be happy after, if he could sustain this world's burden after, why all this pudder and preparation,—why torment us with all this unnecessary sympathy ? As if the childish pleasure of getting his gilt robes and sceptre again could tempt him to act over again his misused station,—as if at his years, and with his experience, anything was left but to die. Lear is essentially impossible to be represented on a stage.

B. Ifor Evans—

Lear's language is not a regular progress from the wild

rhetoric to the complex but distraught speech. Part of his pathos is to be found in the moments of a return to sanity, or at least to an anger which is controlled. So in the heath scene one has the most imaginative expression of a wild and self-consuming rage :

> "Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks ! rage ! blow !
> You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
> Till you have drench'd our steeples drown'd the cocks !
> You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
> Vaunt-couriers to oak cleaving thunderbolts,
> Singe my white head ! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
> Strike flat the thick rotundity o' the world !
> Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once,
> That make ingrateful man !" (III. ii).

In contrast to all this, there appears later the gentle pathos and the considerate quality of the famous speech :

> "Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
> That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
> How shall your houseless heads and unfed sides,
> Your loop'd and window' draggedness, defend you
> From reasons such as these ? O, I have ta'en
> Too little care of this ! Take physique, pomp ;
> Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
> That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
> And show the heavens more just." (III. iv.)

Often there is a pressure and violence in keeping with the dread theme of the tragedy, contrasting, and indeed adding to the pathos of the simpler passages. Thus one of the most sacrificing speeches in the whole of Shakespearean tragedy is to be found in Lear's lines to Gloucester :

> "I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause ?
> Adultery ?
>
> Thou shalt not die for adultery! No :
> The wren goes to't, and the small gilded fly
> Does lecher in my sight." (IV. vi.).

In complete and supremely pathetic contrast is Lear's monosyllabic tenderness and sincerity as he recognizes Cordelia on his return to sanity :

> "Pray, do not mock me :
> I am very foolish fond old man,

> Fourscore and upward, not an hour more nor less ;
> And, to deal plainly,
> I fear I am not in my perfect mind." (IV. vii).

The kindliness is made all the more moving by the other and cruel moods which pursue it.

Ultimately the greatness of the tragedies is that each has a language, individual and proper to itself, gathering its theme, the atmosphere of the time, in which the action is set and its values, along with the spiritual idea in which the tragic conception centres, into a single, unified poetic image. Despite all its diversity the sense of that unity is never greater than in "Lear." Some of the other tragedies may give greater pleasure, but the knowledge remains that in "Lear" no presentation on stage, no close study of the text can reveal the whole. Yet the more detailed the examination, the more unified becomes the creative purpose.

G. Wilson Knight—

In "King Lear" the religion, too, is naturalistic'. We can distinguish three modes of religion stressed here by the poet. First, the constant references to the 'gods'; second, thoughts about ethical justice; and, third, the moral or spiritual development illustrated by the persons before us. The 'gods' so often apostrophized are, however, slightly vitalized : one feels them to be figments of the human mind rather than omnipotent ruling powers—they are presented with no poetic conviction. And exactly, this doubt, this questioning, as to the reality and nature of the directing powers, so evident in the god-references, is one of the primary motives through the play. The gods here are more natural than supernatural ; the good and bad elements in humanity are, too, natural, not as in "Macbeth", supernatural. "King Lear" is throughout naturalistic. The 'gods' are mentioned in various contexts where humanity speaks, under stress of circumstances, its fears or hopes concerning divinity : they are no more than this.

Gloucester mentions them often in the later Acts, after his fortunes become tragic. Adversity elicits his definitely religious expressions. In the scene where his eyes are put out (III. vii)

he thrice refers to the 'gods', twice giving them the epithet 'kind'. Yet shortly after he remarks,

"As flies to wanton boys are, we to the gods ;
They kill us for their sport." (IV. i).

This, however, is not his usual thought. Before his attempted suicide he gives Edgar a jewel, praying that 'fairies and gods' may 'prosper it' with him ; and next speaks his noble prayer commencing : 'O you mighty gods ! This world, I do renounce ....' He is assured by Edgar that his survival is a miracle from 'the clearest gods.' After seeing Lear in madness, Gloucester's sense of the King's sufferings brings home to him his despair's wrongfulness and he asks forgiveness of the 'ever-gentle gods'. The 'gods' are to Gloucester kind, generous beings : and their kindness and generosity are made known to him through his, and others' sufferings. He becomes strangely aware of 'the bounty and the bension of heaven.' His movement toward religion is curiously unrational. Numerous other references to 'the gods' occur. Kent prays that 'the gods' may reward Gloucester's kindness to Lear ; ironical enough in view of what happens to him. Cordelia prays too, 'you kind gods'; Edgar challenges Edmund as 'false to thy gods'; and tells him that 'the gods are just' and 'plague men with their own vices.' Albany refers to the 'gods that we adore', and cries 'the gods defend her !' on hearing of Cordelia's danger. These phrases do not, as a whole, form a convincing declaration of divine reality : Some show at the most an insistent need in humanity to cry for justification to something beyond its horizon, others are almost perfunctory. Even Edmund can say, half-mockingly : 'Now, gods, stand up for bastards ! These gods are, in fact, man-made. They are natural figments of the human mind, not in any other sense transcendent : 'King Lear' is, as a whole, pre-eminently naturalistic. The 'gods' are equivalent in point of reality with 'the stars' that 'govern our conditions' or the 'late eclipses of the sun' and the prophecies mentioned by Gloucester ; or the 'wicked charms' that Edgar was supposed to have been 'mumbling.'

L. C. Knights—

The fact that 'King Lear' was written so soon after 'Othello' (1604) is a reminder of how misleading the phrase 'Shakespearean tragedy' can be. Each play is 'a new beginning', a fresh

'raid on the inarticulate,' for although there is development, there is no repetition. Even from the narrowly technical point of view there are marked differences of manner and approach between the tragedies, corresponding to equally marked differences of intention. Thus, 'Othello', although a poetic drama, of which the success is determined by specifically poetic effects of language and symbolism, comes closer than any of the other tragedies to what is commonly understood by 'revelation of character', and its focus is on individual and, we might say, domestic qualities. 'Lear', on the other hand, is a universal 'allegory' (though the word 'allegory' does justice to neither the depth nor the movement within the experience it presents), and its dramatic technique is determined by the need to present certain permanent aspects of the human situation, with a maximum of imaginative realization and a minimum regard for the conventions of naturalism. In the scenes on the heath, for example, we do not merely listen to exchanges between persons whom, in the course of the play, we have got to know ; we are caught up in a great and almost impersonal poem in which we hear certain 'voices' which echo and counterpoint each other ; all that they say is a part of the tormented consciousness of Lear : and the consciousness of Lear is a part of the consciousness of humankind. There is the same density of effect throughout. One character echoes another : the blinding of Gloucester parallels the cruelty done to Lear : Gloucester loses his eyes and Lear's mind is darkened ; Gloucester learns to 'see better' (as Kent had bidden Lear) in his blindness, and Lear reaches his final insights, the recognition of his supreme need, through madness. But there is not only this mutual reinforcement within the play : there is constantly the felt presence of a range of experience far wider than could be attributed to any of the persons regarded simply as persons. This is received partly by the use of simple but effective symbols—the bare heath, the hovel, the nakedness of Poor Tom ('unaccommodated man'), the 'cliff' from which Gloucester thinks to cast himself down ; partly by the use made of certain organizing ideas such as the Elizabethan conception of a necessary interrelation between man (the 'little world of man') the social body and the cosmos ; but above all by the poetry. The poetry of 'Lear' is not only vivid, close-packed, and wide-

ranging, involving in the immediate action a world of experience, it has a peculiar resonance that should leave us in no doubt of Shakespeare's intention. It is what we hear when the blind Gloucester declares :

"I have no way, and therefore want no eyes ;
I stumbled when I saw." (IV. i)

Or when Lear, crossed by Goneril, exclaims, 'Who is it that can tell me who I am?' and the Fool replies, 'Lear's shadow'. (I. iv).

Wolfgang H. Clemen—

Lear's inner development is portrayed in images more than that of any other character in Shakespeare. The great apostrophes to the elemental forces of nature in the scenes on the heath have already revealed a significant change in Lear. The images of the next scenes, in which the King goes mad, are again illuminating for Lear's state of mind. The swiftly passing images, logically unconnected with each other, which we hear Lear utter, correspond to the abnormal mental state of the King ; they are the adequate form of perception and expression of a lunatic. "It is his mind which is laid bare", Charles Lamb said as an interpretation of these strange speeches—especially in the fourth Act. Lear's insanity should not be dismissed as simple craziness. It is rather another manner of perception, by means of which, however, Lear now sees and recognizes what formerly remained concealed to him, as long as he was sane. These images are the fragments of his inner visions, which have not yet attained to the form of thoughts ; they have not yet been transformed, ordered and connected in logical sequence and in the service of clear statement. Many images in the fourth Act become more comprehensible if light is thrown upon them from previous passages. In the great scene on the heath, we hear Lear cry out :

"Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice : hide thee, thou bloody hand ;
Thou perjured, and thou simular man of virtue
That art incestuous." (III. ii.)

The sins of earth pass before Lear's inner eye as visionary images—the thanklessness of his daughters brings him to the

thanklessness and uprighteousness of the whole world. At first judge of his daughters (*cf.* the judgment scene played in madness with the Fool and Kent, Act III, Sc. vi.), Lear becomes in the fourth Act the judge of all creatures. From the passage quoted above ther: runs a connecting link to Act IV. vi. 165:

"Thou rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back."

Lear, having experienced in his personal world the destruction of human right and order, thus gains insight into the common injustice and frailty of all mankind. His fancy now sees examples of this everywhere in the world. Licence appears to him in the form of animal images (IV. vi.), and in the vision of the "simpering dame"; injustice and mendacity in the image of the railing, of the beggar running from the former's dog, of the hypocritical beadle, and of the magnificent robes which cover vice. In madness Lear has eyes for reality. His inner eye pierces the outer appearance and penetrates to the true nature of things.

Lear's recovery in the fifth Act, too, is clearly reflected in the imagery. Peaceful and delicate things have taken the place of the unclean and repulsive images, and his language is connected, musical and gentle:

"We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage:
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down,
And ask of thee forgiveness; so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies." (V. iii.)

This mood, however, is again interrupted by the terrible and painful experience of Cordelia's death. The fourfold "Howl" when Lear "re-enters with Cordelia dead in his arms" recalls the animal-imagery, and in the next lines spoken by Lear is once again given expression through imagery:

"Had I your tongue and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack."

Lear translates all feelings into bodily terms. His imagery thus conveys to us the impression of immense physical force or, if mental suffering is to be expressed, of immense physical pain. The imagery thus helps to intensify and sharpen the poignancy of the spiritual experience through which Lear has to pass. The above image is the last link in a chain which runs through the whole drama.

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TEXT
AND
PARAPHRASE

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LEAR, *King of Britain.*

KING OF FRANCE.

DUKE OF BURGUNDY.

DUKE OF CORNWALL, *Husband to* REGAN.

DUKE OF ALBANY, *Husband to* GONERIL.

EARL OF KENT.

EARL OF GLOUCESTER.

EDGAR, *Son to* GLOUCESTER.

EDMUND, *Bastard son to* GLOUCESTER.

CURAN, *a Courtier.*

OSWALD, *Steward to* GONERIL.

Old Man, *Tenant to* GLOUCESTER.

Doctor.

Fool.

An Officer, *employed by* EDMUND.

Gentleman, *Attendant on* CORDELIA.

A Herald.

Servants *to* CORNWALL.

GONERIL,
REGAN,
CORDELIA, } *Daughters to* LEAR.

Knights of LEAR'S *train, Officers, Messengers, Soldiers and Attendants.*

Scene : Britain.

KING LEAR

ACT I

SCENE I.—[*A State Room in* King LEAR'S *Palace.*]

Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER, *and* EDMUND.

Kent. I thought the King had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.

Glou. It did always seem so to us; but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the Dukes he values most; for equalities are so weigh'd that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.

Kent. Is not this your son, my Lord?

Glou. His breeding, Sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blush'd to acknowledge him that now I am braz'd to 't.

Kent. I can not conceive you.

Glou. Sir, this young fellow's mother could; whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had indeed, Sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?

Kent. I can not wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.

Glou. But I have a son, Sir, by order of law, some year elder than this, who yet is no dearer in my account: though this knave came something saucily to the world, before he was sent for, yet was his mother fair: there was good sport at his making, and the whoreson must be acknowledged. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. No, my Lord.

Glou. My Lord of Kent: remember him hereafter as my honourable friend.

Edm. My services to your Lordship.

Kent. I must love you, and sue to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall study deserving.

PARAPHRASE

ACT I

SCENE I.—[*A State Room in* King LEAR'S *Palace*.]

Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND.

Kent. I thought that the King had more regard for the Duke of Albany than that of Cornwall.

Glou. It always appeared quite likely to us, but now in the King's scheme of dividing the kingdom, it is not clear whom he holds in greater esteem. The shares are so evenly balanced that even the most careful scrutiny cannot find one to be superior to the other in the least degree.

Kent. Is he not your son, my Lord?

Glou. His upbringing, Sir, has been at my expense. I have so often blushed in acknowledging him that now I have become insensible to any sense of shame.

Kent. I am unable to gather what you say.

Glou. His mother, however, could conceive, in consequence of which she carried and had a son for her cradle, before she could have a husband to share her bed. Do you consider this to be a sin?

Kent. In the light of its result being so handsome, I would not wish the fault undone.

Glou. But I have a son, Sir, legitimately begotten, about a year older than he and not so dear in my estimation. This fellow came somewhat impudently to the world, before he was called for, yet his mother was a charming woman. His coming was celebrated amidst cheerful sports and the bastard must be given due recognition. Do you know this noble gentleman, Edmund?

Edm. I don't know, my Lord.

Glou. He is my Lord of Kent. You should remember him, henceforth, as my honourable friend.

Edm. My services are at your Lordship's command.

Kent. I will love you and endeavour to know you better.

Edm. Sir, I shall strive my best to deserve the honour of being better known to you.

Glou. He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again. The King is coming.

Sennet. Enter One, bearing a coronet, then King LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, *and* Attendants.

Lear. Attend the Lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.

Glou. I shall, my Liege.

[*Exeunt* GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND.

Lear. Meantime, we shall express our darker purpose.—
Give me the map there. Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom; and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburthen'd crawl toward death. Our son of Cornwall,
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughter's several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The Princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answered. Tell me, my daughters,
Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

Gon. Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter;
Dearer than eyesight, space and liberty;
Beyond, what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honour;
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor and speech unable:
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Glou. He has been abroad for nine years and shall go again. The King is coming.

Sennet. Enter One, bearing a coronet, then King LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA *and* Attendants.

Lear. Wait on the Lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester and usher them into our presence.

Glou. I am bound to my Lord.

[*Exeunt* GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND.

Lear. Meanwhile, we shall express our more secret intention. Give me the map, as we wish to divide our kingdom into three parts and it is our steadfast prupose to be free from the encumbrances, at this age, conferring them on younger ones, while we, thus being unburdened, crawl towards death. Our son of Cornwall, and you, our equally loving son of Albany, we have at this moment, our unalterable intention to announce the portions, which we mean to dower on each of our daughters, so that the future conflict may be forestalled, just now. Lords of France and Burgundy, both as great rivals, have been staying for long in our court, to win Cordelia's love. They shall shortly be present here to receive their answer. Since now we will deprive ourselves of the rule, the possession of territory and other obligations of state, tell us our daughters, whom shall we consider loving us most, so that we may devolve our largest share, where the claims of merit are superadded to that of nature. Our eldest daughter, Goneril, shall speak first.

Gon. Sir, I love you more than what I can express in feeble words, and to me, you are dearer than the light of my own eyes, dearer than the wide world and liberty. My love can't be surpassed by any riches or rare objects. I consider my own life, with all its grace, health, beauty, and honour, as inferior to my love, which is as much as any child could have or a father could find. The breath is insufficient and speech inadequate to express my love, which, in fact, is beyond all these comparisons.

Cor. [*Aside.*] What shall Cordelia speak? Love, and be silent.

Lear. Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champions rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady: to thine and Albany's issue
Be this perpetual. What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall? Speak.

Reg. I am made of that self metal as my sister,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short; that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys
Which the most precious square of sense possesses;
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

Cor. [*Aside.*] Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so; since I am sure my love's
More ponderous than my tongue.

Lear. To thee and thine hereditary ever,
Remains this ample third of our fair kingdom,
No less in space, validity, and pleasure
Than that conferr'd on Goneril. Now our joy,
Although the last, not least; to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interessed; what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters? Speak.

Cor. Nothing, my Lord.

Lear. Nothing?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing: speak again.

Cor. Unhappy that I am, I can not heave
My heart into my mouth; I love your Majesty,
According to my bond; nor more no less.

Lear. How, how, Cordelia! Mend your speech a little,
Lest you may mar your fortunes.

Cor. [*Aside.*] What shall you say, Cordelia? Love and be reticent.

Lear. We make you the Lady of all these areas, right from this line to that, with shadowy forests, enriched with unwooded plains, with fertilizing rivers and extensive meadows. May this be handed down from you and Albany to your next generation ! What would our second daughter, the wife of Cornwall, our dearest Regan, say?

Reg. I am made of the same metal as my sister is and estimate myself as her equal in the intensity of my love for you. In the depth of my heart, I find that she exactly describes my love except that she is really too modest in her description of love. For that I consider myself an enemy to all other joys, which the most delicately sensitive part of my nature is capable of enjoying. Your Highness's love is the only source of my joy.

Cor. [*Aside.*] Then what would you have to say, poor Cordelia, though certainly not poor in love, except only in words, since I am sure that my love is too heavy to be coined into words.

Lear. We bestow upon you, your husband and your future generation, this affluent third of our fairly large kingdom, which is equal, in space, value and pleasurable capacity, to the share conferred on Goneril. Now our favourite child, the youngest, yet in no way less important, Cordelia, in whose youthful love, the Lords of France and Burgundy are keenly interested. What would you say to draw a third, still more plentiful than your sisters? Speak, Cordelia.

Cor. I have nothing to say, my Lord.

Lear. What ! have you nothing to say?

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. As nothing will come out of nothing, therefore speak again.

Cor. I am so unfortunate that the feelings of my heart are too deep to be put into words. I love your Majesty, according to my duty as a daughter, neither more, nor less than that.

Lear. How, how is that, Cordelia! Do improve your speech a little, lest you should be deprived of the fortunes which we thought to confer on you.

Cor. Good my Lord,
You have begot me, bred me, loved me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply, when I shall wed,
That lord, whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty:
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

Lear. But goes thy heart with this?

Cor. Ay, my good Lord.

Lear. So young, and so untender?

Cor. So young, my Lord, and true.

Lear. Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower:
For, by the sacred radiance of the sun,
The mysteries of Hecate and the night,
By all the operation of the orbs,
From whom we do exist and cease to be,
Here I disclaim all my paternal care,
Propinquity, and property of blood,
And as a stranger to my heart and me
Hold thee from this for ever. The barbarous Scythian,
Or he that makes his generation messes
To gorge his appetite, shall to my bosom
Be as well neighbour'd, pitied and relieved,
As thou my sometime daughter.

Kent. Good, my Liege,—

Lear. Peace, Kent!
Come not between the dragon and his wrath.
I lov'd her most, and thought to set my rest
On her kind nursery. Hence, and avoid my sight!—
So be my grave my peace, as here I give
Her father's heart from her! Call France;—who stirs?
Call Burgundy.—Cornwall and Albany,
With my two daughters' dowers digest the third;
Let pride, which she calls plainness, marry her.

Cor. My good Lord, you have begotten, brought up and loved me. For my part, now I return those duties, as they are right and fit to be returned, by obeying, loving and honouring you. Why should my sisters, as they profess to love you, (without any love to be spared for others) have husbands at all? Fortunately, when I am wedded, my husband, who would take my solemn pledge, shall rightfully claim and carry half my love, care and duty. Surely I shall never marry, like my sisters, to keep all my love exclusively for you.

Lear. Does your heart ratify to what you speak so insolently ?

Cor. Yes, my good Lord, it does.

Lear. So youthful, and yet so hard is your heart?

Cor. So youthful, and so true, it is.

Lear. Let it be so then, and let your truth be your wedding-dower, as by the sacred warmth of the sun, the secret rites of the goddess of the underworld, Hecate and night, by all the influence of the heavenly planets, determining our life and death, 'I hereby cease to be your father and disclaim all my kinship and close-blood-relationship with you and henceforth I denounce you as a stranger, once for all. The vandalic Scythian, or he, who, in order to satisfy his appetite, would greedily swallow his own progeny, as portions of food, shall be as warmly welcome, pitied and comforted, in my heart, as you, when you were my daughter, a little earlier.

Kent. My good Lord!—

Lear. Keep silent, Kent, and don't venture to come between the dragon and the object of his wrath. I loved her most, and on her tender care and nursing did I stake all my hopes. Get yourself off. Don't come before my eyes. Death alone can bring me peace, as I have broken my parental affinity with Cordelia. Call the Lord of France. What noise is that? Call the Lord of Burgundy. Cornwall and Albany, let the third share also be incorporated into my two daughters' dowers. Let Cordelia's pride, which she calls plainness, alone be her

I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustained, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name and all th' additions to a king; the sway,
Revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part between you.

[*Giving the crown.*

Kent. Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honour'd as my king,
Lov'd as my father, as my master follow'd,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers,—

Lear. The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft.

Kent. Let it fall rather, though the fork invade
The region of my heart: Be Kent unmannerly
When Lear is mad. What would'st thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak
When power to flattery bows? To planness honour's bound
When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state;
And, in thy best consideration check
This hideous rashness: answer my life my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverb no hollowness.

Lear. Kent, on thy life, no more.

Kent. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thine enemies; nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.

Lear. Out of my sight!

Kent. See better, Lear; and let me still remain
The true blank of thine eye.

dowry, enabling her to win a husband. I do invest you jointly with all my power, privilege and all those splendid accompaniments, which are associated with us. As for ourselves, we would like Goneril and Regan, alternately a month with each, reserving a following of one hundred knights (to serve as bodyguards for ourselves), to be maintained by you. We, however, retain our name, the title of king with its honours and ceremonial observances. The rest of the powers, revenues and other reyal prerogatives, would be yours, my dear sons, to confirm which, here I offer you this coronet between you.

[*Giving the crown.*

Kent. Imperial Lear, whom I have always respected as my King, loved as my father, followed as my master and set in my prayers, as my patron,—

Lear. The bow is bent and extended to its full length, stand aside from the way of the arrow.

Kent. Let the arrow fall, even though it might pierce the core of my heart. Kent would not mind being rude, in case Lear goes mad. What would you do, old man ? Do you think, a duty-bound person will be afraid to speak the truth, when power itself yields to flattery. When the king commits a folly, plain-speaking is incumbent on my part, for the sake of honour. Reserve your royal dignity and power, considering everything seriously and anxiously, check your hideous recklessness: I am prepared to stake my life upon the soundness of my judgment, when I assure you that your youngest daughter does not least love you. You think but in vain that these empty-hearted daughters, by their low sounds, fail to signify concavity and insincerity on their part.

Lear. Kent, speak now, but only at the risk of your life.

Kent. I ever considered my life a pledge to be staked against your enemies. I had no fear of losing it, with the sole motive of your well-being.

Lear. Get yourself off from our presence.

Kent. See better, Lear; and as in the past, keep me always in your view.

Lear. Now, by Apollo,—
Kent. Now, by Apollo, King,
Thou swear'st thy gods in vain.
Lear. O, vassal! miscreant!
[*Laying his hand on his sword.*

Alb. and Corn. Dear Sir, forbear.
Kent. Kill thy physician, and the fee bestow
Upon the foul disease. Revoke thy doom
Or, whilst I can vent clamour from my throat,
I'll tell thee thou dost evil.
Lear. Hear me, recreant!
On thine allegiance, hear me!—
That thou hast sought to make us break our vows,
Which we durst never yet,—and with strain'd pride
To come betwixt our sentence and our power,—
Which nor our nature, nor our place can bear,—
Our potency made good, take thy reward.
Five days we do allot thee for provision
To shield thee from the disasters of the world;
And on the sixth to turn thy hated back
Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day following,
Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,
The moment is thy death. Away! by Jupiter,
This shall not be revoked.
Kent. Fare thee well, King; sith thus thou wilt appear,
Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here.—
[*To Cordelia*] The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid
That justly think'st and hast most rightly said;
[*To Goneril and Regan*] And your large speeches may your deeds approve,
That good effects may spring from words of love!
Thus Kent, O princes, bids you all adieu;
He'll shape his old course in a country new. [*Exit.*

Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER *with* FRANCE, BURGUNDY, *and* Attendants.

Glou. Here's France and Burgundy, my noble Lord.

Lear. Now, by the sun-god, Apollo.

Kent. Now by Apollo, King, you invoke your gods, but in vain.

Lear. O, slavish misbeliever!

[Laying his hand upon his sword.

Alb. and Corn. Be merciful, your Majesty.

Kent. As a frantic patient, kill your benefactor, physician, in your love for the fatal disease and acquit yourself. Reverse your judgment or else I, while my throat helps, am bound to express my regret for the wrong done by you.

Lear. Speak no more, rebel, and be obedient to our sovereignty and listen to what we say. Seeing that you, led by your outrageous pride, have interposed yourself between our judgment and the power to execute it, arrogantly presuming to compel us to depart from our sworn purpose, which we neither as man nor as king, can with safety endure, now hear your doom. For a period of five days, you are permitted to make preparations, so as to provide yourself against the discomforts of the approaching exile. Thereafter, on the sixth day, you will betake your hateful personage, beyond the limits of our territory and if, after ten days, you were found lingering in our kingdom, you will instantaneously be put to death. Go away at once from here, as I swear by the immortal Jupiter that this sentence of banishment shall not be recalled.

Kent. May you fare well, King! Since under the sway of your despotism, you are firm on your verdict, I, being exiled from here, take my leave, together with my freedom, to be enjoyed elsewhere. [To Cordelia] May gods protect you, so virtuous a lady, as you are! Whatever you think is proper and justified and whatever you spoke is truth. [*To Goneril and Regan*] May your deeds prove the truth of your extravagant speeches and may the words of love, uttered by you, be followed by good results ! In this manner, O Princes and others, I bid you good-bye, assuring you that I will follow my former manner of life, by sticking to my principles, come what may. [*Exit.*

Flourish. Re-enter GLOUCESTER, *with* FRANCE, BURGUNDY *and* Attendants.

Glou. Here are the Lords of France and Burgundy, my good Liege.

Lear. My Lord of Burgundy
We first address toward you, who with this king
Hath rivall'd for our daughter. What, in the least,
Will you require in present dower with her,
Or cease your quest of love?
Bur. Most royal Majesty,
I crave no more than hath your Highness offer'd,
Nor will you tender less.
Lear. Right noble Burgundy,
When she was dear to us we did hold her so.
But now her price is fallen. Sir, there she stands:
If aught within that little-seeming substance,
Or all of it, with our displeasure piec'd,
And nothing more, may fitly like your Grace,
She's there, and she is yours.
Bur. I know no answer.
Lear. Will you, with those infirmities she owes,
Unfriended, new-adopted to our hate,
Dower'd with our curse and stranger'd with our oath,
Take her, or leave her?
Bur. Pardon me, royal Sir;
Election makes not up in such conditions.
Lear. Then leave her, sir; for, by the power that made me,
I tell you all her wealth.
[*To* FRANCE] For you, great King,
I would not from your love make such a stray
To match you where I hate; therefore beseech you
T' avert your liking a more worthier way
Than on a wretch whom Nature is asham'd
Almost t' acknowledge hers.
France. This is most strange,
That she, who even but now was your best object,
The argument of your praise, balm of your age,

comfort of your old age

Lear. My Lord of Burgundy, we first address to you, who have been a competitor with this King of France for our daughter's wedlock. With what smallest dower will you be satisfied and without which you will give up your expedition of love for her?

Bur. Most regal Majesty, I hanker after no more than what your Highness has already earmarked for me, as I feel assured that whatever is to be offered by you, can't be insufficient.

Lear. You rightly think, my Lord of Burgundy. In fact, while we loved her, as our dear daughter, we were willingly prepared to bestow a large dowry upon her. But now, she has fallen from our esteem. Sir, whatever she is, she stands there, that little substance pretending reality, with nothing to supplement her except our displeasure, as the only dower she would carry. If nothing more than she (as described by me) may reasonably find favour in your eyes, she stands there awaiting to be accepted by you.

Bur. Now, I, after long kept on tenter-hooks, am in a fix and know not what answer to make.

Lear. Will you accept Cordelia, with all those disqualifications (mentioned by us), she being rendered friendless, newly received into our hatred, endowed with our curse and denounced as a stranger by our oath, or reject her?

Bur. I beg to be pardoned by your Majesty, as I fail to exercise my choice on terms such as these.

Lear. Then, you are at liberty to reject her, sir, as in the name of God, who created me, I have clearly told you about whatever she possesses. [To France] As regards you, great King of France, I feel sorry in following the course, so opposite to the love, shown by you to me and reciprocating so little of your good-will towards me as to marry you to one whom I hate. I, therefore, entreat your good self to withdraw your love, hitherto placed on an unworthy creature, and direct it towards some one else, more deserving than the miserable Cordelia, in owning whom the Nature feels ashamed.

France. This is indeed most strange that she who, a moment ago, was the most delightful to your eyes, the central theme of your praise, the source of comfort in your age,

The best, the dearest, should in this trice of time
Commit a thing so monstrous, to dismantle
So many folds of favour. Sure her offence
Must be of such unnatural degree
That monsters it, or your fore-vouch'd affection
Fall into taint; which to believe of her,
Must be a faith that reason, without miracle,
Should never plant in me.

Cor. I yet beseech your Majesty,
(If for I want that glib and oily art
To speak and purpose not, since what I well intend,
I'll do 't before I speak), that you make known
It is no vicious blot, murther or foulness,
No unchaste action, or dishonour'd step,
That hath deprived me of your grace and favour,
But even for want of that, for which I am richer,
A still-soliciting eye, and such a tongue
That, I am glad, I have not, though not to have it
Hath lost me in your liking.

Lear. Better thou
Hadst not been born than not to have pleased me better.

France. Is it but this? a tardiness in nature
Which often leaves the history unspoke
That it intends to do? My Lord of Burgundy,
What say you to the lady? Love's not love,
When it is mingled with regards that stand
Aloof from th' entire point. Will you have her?
She is herself a dowry.

Bur. Royal King,
Give, but that portion which yourself propos'd,
And here I take Cordelia by the hand,
Duchess of Burgundy.

the best, the dearest, should strip herself of the tokens of your love. No doubt, either she must have committed some monstrous action, or if she had not committed any such offence, that love, proclaimed so magniloquently by you for her, must have been incredibly infected with some disease, having undergone a process of decay. My belief in any such monstrous crime of Cordelia would require of me, a faith, which reason alone, without being superadded by a miracle, could not have implanted in my heart.

Cor. I entreat your Majesty, even though you are full of wrath at me (because I lack that smooth fluency of hypocritical words, merely to be uttered, without any further intention to put them into action), that since I translate my intention into action, even before giving it a wordy expression, you may kindly announce to this audience that it is neither the monstrous and unnatural offence like murder, nor falling from chastity nor any other dishonourable deed, but sheer lack of sycophancy and the deceptive rigmarole of words, that has forfeited me your favour. Even for the want of these traits, such as an incessantly begging, greedy eye and a tongue, habituated to wheedling and coaxing, I feel myself inwardly richer. Not to have them has made me quite happy, although thereby I have ruined myself, depriving myself of your love as well as your favour.

Lear. You had better not have been born rather than not to have pleased me better.

France. Is it nothing but this? Nothing more than an innate reticence (without being able to communicate what goes in the heart or inner life of man), in proclaiming the love, which will surely rise to the occasion to be shown in action. My Lord of Burgundy, what do you have to say to so virtuous a lady? That love, which is guided in its course by the ulterior motives and considerations, which have little to do with the main point is far from being real, is hollow and perverse. Are you prepared to accept her? She, being so richly endowed with virtues, does not need any other dower to win a husband.

Bur. Your Majesty, bestow upon me only that portion of dowry, which you yourself proposed for her and here I readily accept Cordelia to make her Duchess of Burgundy.

Lear. Nothing: I have sworn; I am firm.

Bur. I am sorry, then, you have so lost a father,
That you must lose a husband.

Cor. Peace be with Burgundy!
Since that respect and fortunes are his love,
I shall not be his wife.

France. Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich, being poor;
Most choice, forsaken; and most lov'd despis'd!
Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon:
Be it lawful I take up what's cast away.
Gods, gods! 'tis strange that from their cold'st neglect
My love should kindle to inflam'd respect.
Thy dowerless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,
Is Queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy
Can buy this unpriz'd precious maid of me.
Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind,
Thou losest here, a better where to find.

Lear. Thou hast her, France; let her be thine, for we
Have no such daughter, nor shall ever see
That face of hers again; therefore be gone
Without our grace, our love, our benison.
Come, noble Burgundy.

[*Flourish. Exeunt* LEAR, BURGUNDY, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GLOUCESTER *and* Attendants.

France. Bid farewell to your sisters.

Cor. The jewels of our father, with wash'd eyes,
Cordelia leaves you: I know you what you are;
And like a sister am most loath to call
Your faults as they are named. Love well our father:
To your professed bosoms I commit him:
But yet, alas! stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
So farewell to you both!

Reg. Prescribe not us our duty.

Lear. Nothing, as I have sworn to be firm on my verdict.

Bur. I regret then, Cordelia, as you have lost the love of a father, even so you will forfeit the chance of me for a husband.

Cor. Burgundy may better keep silent. Since his love is constituted by considerations of fortune, I refuse to be a wife to him.

France. Most charming Cordelia, most rich in character even though poor (deprived of the dower), the choicest, even though destitute, most lovely, even though denounced, I accpet you, endowed with your virtues, thinking it to be lawful to take up what is left by others as useless. Gods, gods! It is strange enough that their icy neglect should cause my love to kindle into a flame of ardent appreciation! Your daughter, King, though without a dower and so listlessly thrown to my lot, is now ours, the Queen of our magnificent France. Now even all the dukes of watery Burgundy cannot take away this invaluable maid (although, whom others could not appreciate) from my hand. Cordelia, bid them all good-bye, though they have treated you acrimoniously. What you lose here, will much better be compensated at another place.

Lear. You are accepting her, France and let her be yours as we have broken our paternal ties with her. Never shall we see her face again. Therefore you may better go even without our grace, without our love and blessings. Come, noble Duke of Burgundy, let us move hence.

[*Flourish. Exeunt* LEAR, BURGUNDY, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GLOUCESTER, *and* Attendants.

France. Cordelia, bid good-bye to your sisters.

Cor. With tearful eyes, Cordelia leaves you my sisters, who are so naturally dear and precious in our father's eyes. Although I know pretty well about your true character, but like a sister, however, feel reluctant in calling your faults by their nomenclature, which would fully express their loathsomeness. May you love our father well, whom I commit to your protestations of love and affections. But alas! If only I were lavoured to be listened, I would recommend him to some better shelter than what he will find with you. So good-bye to you both!

Reg. You need not prescribe our duty to us.

Gon. Let your study
Be to content your lord, who hath receiv'd you
At Fortune's alms; you have obedience scanted,
And well are worth the want that you have wanted.

Cor. Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides;
Who cover fault, at last with shame derides.
Well may you prosper!

France. Come, my fair Cordelia.

[*Exeunt* FRANCE *and* CORDELIA.

Gon. Sister, it is not little, I have to say of what most nearly appertains to us both. I think our father will hence tonight.

Reg. That's most certain and with you; next month with us.

Gon. You see how full of changes his age is; the observation we have made of it hath not been little: he always loved bur sister most; and with what poor judgment he hath now cast her off appears too grossly.

Reg. 'Tis the infirmity of his age; yet he hath ever but slenderly known himself.

Gon. The best and soundest of his time hath been but rash; then must he look from his age, to receive not alone the imperfections of long-engraffed conditions, but therewithal the unruly waywardness that infirm and choleric years bring with them.

Reg. Such unconstant starts are we like to have from him as this of Kent's banishment.

Gon. There is further compliment of leave-taking between France and him. Pray you, let us hit together: if our father carry authority with such disposition, as he bears, this last surrender of his will offend us.

Gon. Let your anxious endeavour be to satisfy your Lord, who accepted you, as if you were bestowed upon him as mere charity by Fortune. You have fallen short in your obedience to our father and hence you richly deserve to be treated unkindly (in being deprived of the dower) because of your own lack of affection and kind consideration for the father.

Cor. Time alone shall discover, what remains hidden under your dissembling tricks. It is true that those who endeavour to conceal their faults, under a mask of virtue, are eventually sure to be ridiculed. May you prosper well !

France. Come, my beautiful Cordelia, let us move hence.

Exeunt FRANCE *and* CORDELIA.

Gon. Sister, I have much to tell you, which closely concerns both of us. I think that our father would be departing hence to-night.

Reg. That is most definite and he would live with you for a month and thereafter in the month that follows, he would shift to us.

Gon. You may notice how full of changes (caused by dotage) he is and our observation thereof is not an insufficient testimony to what we think about him. He always loved our sister most and with what little discernment he has denounced her, is quite an apparent fact.

Reg. It is all due to the weakness, because of his old age, but he has always imperfectly known his mind and purposes, with a poor understanding of his own drawbacks.

Gon. Even during the years, while he enjoyed the best health of his mind, he had been impulsive. Now we must not only fear of his short-comings, due to the deeply ingrained qualities of his disposition, but along with them the uncontrollable eccentricities of his behaviour, brought by dotage in its train.

Reg. We are likely to have, in the immediate future, such fits of passion and temper as this of Kent's exile by him.

Gon. He and the King of France are still engaged in their ceremonious farewells. Please let us vigorously act on a joint plan to deal with his caprices. In case our father continued to behave with the same whimsical disposition, as at present, his surrender of kingdom, in our favour, would surely cause manifold annoyances.

Reg. We shall further think of it.

Gon. We must do something, and i' th' heat.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—[*The* EARL OF GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*]

Enter EDMUND *with a letter.*

Edm. Thou, Nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base?
Who in the lusty stealth of nature take
More composition and fierce quality
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to th' creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got 'tween asleep and wake? Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to th' legitimate. Fine word, "legitimate"!
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top th' legitimate:—I grow, I prosper:
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

Enter GLOUCESTER.

Glou. Kent banish'd thus! And France in choler parted!
And the King gone to-night! subscrib'd his power!
Confin'd to exhibition! All this done
Upon the gad!—Edmund, how now! What news?

Edm. So please your Lordship, none.

[*Putting up the letter.*

Reg. We shall further think about the plan we could jointly sponsor.

Gon. We must do something and be prompt enough in that. [*Exeunt.*

Scene II.—[*The* EARL OF GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*]

Enter EDMUND, *with a letter.*

Edm. Nature, you are my patroness and your dictates shall I follow, and not those of law and custom. Why should I stand a passive victim to the blows of pestilential custom and allow the nice distinctions of nations (defying nature and commonsense) to so unreasonably disinherit me, simply because I am younger than my brother by twelve or fourteen months? Why after all should the people call me base-born, or bastard, when the parts of my body are as well put together as that of Edgar; when I am as true an image of father as he is and when I have a mother, who can boast of being as chaste and honest as any mother can? Why should we be branded ignoble and unlawful, base-born and illegitimate? What should they be told, who, being more energetic and better blended in their parts than the realistic, languid and hackneyed occupants of marriage bed, are responsible for the creation of the whole race of dupes, begotten unconsciously at the odd hours. Well then Edgar, the legitimate, I must have my due share in the estates of our father, as our father's love to you is as much as it is to me. So good does the word 'legitimate' sound! Well, my legitimate brother, if this letter as well as my plan succeeds in its objective, I shall overthrow you and rise over you. Here is my chance to progress, now, gods, come to the defence of the bastards.

Enter GLOUCESTER.

Glou. It is woeful that Kent was sent into exile, and France parted indignantly and the King, having surrendered his regal authority and limited his expenses to a fixed allowance, departed last night. All this happened, as if goaded by a sudden impulse. Edmund, how are you here, now? What tidings have you brought?

Edm. If it so pleases your Lordship, I have brought no news.

[*Putting up the letter.*

Glou. Why so earnestly seek you to put up that letter?

Edm. I know no news, my Lord.

Glou. What paper are you reading?

Edm. Nothing, my Lord.

Glou. No? What needed then that terrible despatch of it into your pocket? The quality of nothing hath not much need to hide itself. Let's see: come; if it be nothing, I shall not need spectacles.

Edm. I beseech you, sir, pardon me; it is a letter from my brother that I have not all o'er read, and for so much, as I have perus'd, I find it not fit for your overlooking.

Glou. Give me the letter, sir.

Edm. I shall offend, either to detain or give it. The contents, as in part I understand them, are to blame.

Glou. Let's see, let's see.

Edm. I hope, for my brother's justification, he wrote this but as an essay or taste of my virtue.

Glou. [*Reads.*] "The policy and reverence of age makes the world bitter, to the best of our times; keeps our fortunes from us till our oldness can not relish them. I begin to find an idle and fond bondage in the oppression of the aged tyranny, who sways, not as it hath power, but as it is suffer'd. Come to me, that of this I may speak more. If our father would sleep till I wak'd him, you should enjoy half his revenue for ever, and live the beloved of your brother, Edgar."—Hum! Conspiracy! "Sleep till I wak'd him,—you should enjoy half his revenue." My son, Edgar! Had he a hand to write this? a heart and brain to breed it in? When came you to this? who brought it?

Glou. What makes you conceal that letter in such an eager excitement?

Edm. I don't have any news to be conveyed, my Lord.

Glou. What was that paper, which you were reading?

Edm. It was nothing, my Lord.

Glou. If it were nothing, why did you thrust the letter into your pocket with a fearful haste? If the letter really didn't contain anything worth while, how were you prompted to conceal it? Hand it over to us, as we will have a look at it. In case it's nothing, we won't need spectacles for its perusal.

Edm. I entreat you, my Lord, to excuse me. It is a letter from my brother and I have myself not fully gone through the contents, but whatever I have been able to read, is not worthy of being inspected by you.

Glou. Hand over the letter to me, sir.

Edm. In retaining as well as giving away the letter, offence is mine. The contents of the letter, as I could comprehend a part thereof, are such as to deserve blame.

Glou. Let us look into the letter; give it to us.

Edm. I am sure that my brother is justified in whatever he wrote. He wrote it with good intention merely to make trial or experiment of my honour.

Glou. [*Reads*] "This policy of holding age in reverence makes the world bitter even in the very prime of our youth, which is capable of providing us full enjoyment, and deprives us of our fortunes, until our age can't appreciate and enjoy them. I begin to feel that it is nothing but a miserable state of vain and foolish servitude to be thus oppressed by the tyrannical restraint, exercised by the old man (*i.e.*, his father), who is capable of oppressing us not on account of his inherent power but because of our willingness to submit to him. Make it a point to meet me, as I wish to speak more about this to you. If our father were asleep till I awoke him, for ever should you enjoy the half of his estate and live a dear brother to me, Edgar." Ugh! I smell of conspiracy in that! "Sleep till I awoke him,—you should enjoy half of his estate." All this is to be done by my son, Edgar! How could he have a hand to write that much? With what heart and brain could he conceive it? Who brought this letter to you? When did you get it?

Edm. It was not brought me, my Lord; there's the cunning of it; I found it thrown in, at the casement of my closet.

Glou. You know the character to be your brother's?

Edm. If the matter were good, my Lord, I durst swear it were his; but, in respect of that, I would fain think it were not.

Glou. It is his.

Edm. It is his hand, my Lord; but I hope his heart is not in the contents.

Glou. Has he never before sounded you in this business?

Edm. Never, my Lord. But I have heard him oft maintain it to be fit that, sons at perfect age and fathers declin'd, the father should be as ward to the son, and the son manage his revenue.

Glou. O villain, villain! His very opinion in the letter! Abhorred villain! Unnatural, detested, brutish villain! worse than brutish! Go, sirrah, seek him; I'll apprehend him, Abominable villain! Where is he?

Edm. I do not well know, my Lord. If it shall please you to suspend your indignation against my brother till you can derive from him better testmony of his intent, you shall run a certain course; where, if you violently proceed against him, mistaking his purpose, it would make a great gap in your own honour, and shake in pieces the heart of his obedience. I dare pawn down my life for him, that he hath writ this to feel my affection to your honour, and to no other pretence of danger.

Glou. Think you so?

Edm. Nobody brought it to me, my Lord. There seems to be a trick in that. In fact I found it thrown inside the open window of my private apartment.

Glou. Are you sure that it is in your brother's handwriting?

Edm. If the contents of the letter were good, my Lord, I should have daringly sworn and said that he alone wrote it, but seeing that the purport is bad I would gladly think that he did not.

Glou. It is your brother's handwriting.

Edm. It is surely his own handwriting, my Lord, but I believe that his heart does not testify to the contents of the letter.

Glou. Has he any time earlier also attempted to find out what your views were on the subject?

Edm. He never endeavoured in this regard, my Lord. Nevertheless, I have often heard him justifying it that the sons having attained maturity, and the fathers declining in years, the father (without any more clinging to power and possession) should live under the guardianship of the son, who should well be entrusted with the management of the estate.

Glou. Oh, he is a villain, a rank villain! This letter but expresses his secret designs! Detestable villain! Unnatural, abominable and vandalic villain! Worse than brutish! I will seize him and have him brought here. Obnoxious and repugnant villain! Where is he at this moment?

Edm. I don't quite know his whereabouts, my Lord. If it shall please you, cease being wrathful against my brother, until the time, you get a more sound evidence of his intention, you would be pursuing a safe course. On the contrary, if you think of violently proceeding against him, being doubtful of his purpose, you would not only injure your honour but also would shatter all feelings of filial obedience in him. I am prepared even to stake my life for the honesty of his intention, in so far as he has written this letter to test my love to your honour, without any pugnatious design or any dangerous intention.

Glou. Do you really think that way?

Edm. If your honour judge it meet, I will place you where you shall hear us confer of this, and by an auricular assurance have your satisfaction; and that without any further delay than this very evening.

Glou. He cannot be such a monster—

Edm. Nor is not, sure.

Glou.—To his father that so tenderly and entirely loves him. Heaven and earth! Edmund seek him out; wind me into him. I pray you, frame the business after your own wisdom. I would unstate myself to be in a due resolution.

Edm. I will seek him, Sir, presently; convey the business as I shall find means, and acquaint you withal.

Glou. These late eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us: though the wisdom of Nature can reason it thus and thus, yet Nature finds itself scourg'd by the sequent effects. Love cools, friendship falls off, brothers divide; in cities, mutinies; in countries, discord; in palaces, treason; and the bond crack'd 'twixt son and father. The villain of mine comes under the prediction: there's son against father: the King falls from bias of nature: there's father against child. We have seen the best of our time: machinations, hollowness, treachery, and ruinous disorders follow us disquietly to our graves. Find out this villain, Edmund; it shall lose thee nothing; do it carefully. And the noble and true-hearted Kent banish'd! his offence, honesty! 'Tis strange.

[*Exit.*

Edm. If your honour think it proper, I will place you wherefrom you could overhear what passes in a conference in between us on that issue, and thus by the testimony of your own ears, be convinced either of his innocence or of his guilt for your satisfaction, and without any further postponement, I would implement this plan this very evening.

Glou. How could he be such a devil?

Edm. Surely, he is not one of that kind.

Glou. He has deceived a father, who loved him so softly and fully. Edmund, move heaven and earth to search him out. Steal into his confidence in order to know his real intention for me. Manage the business, applying your own skill therein. I would rather give up my position and rank as an earl to be assured either of his guilt or of his innocence.

Edm. I will immediately search him out, Sir, and I will execute my business with due secrecy and tact, which the circumstances would permit me and thereafter let you know which way the wind blows.

Glou. These recent eclipses in the sun and moon forecast nothing that is good to us: though the laws of natural philosophy portend to account for such phenomena by this or that supposition, yet the natural world of men is afflicted by the disasters that follow. Love fades, friendship turns into enmity, brothers become estranged taking up the opposite sides in disputes: in cities, riots and insurrections prevail; in countries, the disruptive forces overpower; and in palaces, the treacherous activities augment; and the recognized bond of love and duty between son and father is broken. My villainous son, Edgar falls a victim to this foreboding; the son goes against the father: the king goes against the natural instincts and the father comes to be at enmity with his own child. We have lived down our best days: vicious plots, insincerity, treason and all destructive disorders pursue us, causing disquiet, until we die. Edmund finds out this wretched villain; you will lose nothing by doing so; nay, it will be a positive gain to you. Be very vigilant in doing your work. And the exile of noble and truth-loving Kent, for no offence but his honesty. It is something quite strange.

[*Exit.*

Edm. This is the excellent foppery of the world, that when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters, the sun, the moon and stars; as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars and adulterers by an enforc'd obedience of planetary influence; and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goatish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous. Tut! I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing. Edgar—

Enter EDGAR.

—and pat he comes, like the catastrophe of the old comedy: my cue is villainous melancholy, with a sigh like Tom O' Bedlam. O! these eclipses do portend these divisions! Fa, sol, la, mi.

Edg. How now, brother Edmund! What serious contemplation are you in?

Edm. I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read this other day, what should follow these eclipses.

Edg. Do you busy yourself with that?

Edm. I promise you, the effects he writes of succeed unhappily; as of unnaturalness, between the child and the parent, death, dearth, dissolutions of ancient amities; divisions in state; menaces and maledictions against King and nobles: needless diffidences, banishment of friends, dissipation of cohorts, nuptial breaches, and I know not what.

Edm. This is indeed an extreme kind of stupidity, whereby the world cheats itself, that when we are overwhelmed by misfortunes, maybe, as a result of our own extravagant indulgences, we attribute the disasters to the sun, the moon and other constellations; as if it were inevitable on our part to become villains, to become fools, as if decreed by heavens, scoundrels thieves, traitors by planetary impact at the time of our birth determining our conduct in later life; drunkards, liars, adulterers by an obedience, superimposed by the influence of the celestial bodies, all our evils and sinful indulgences, thus being the incitement of the supernatural agencies. It is all nothing but the shrewd excuse of a pander, who would, for his own lascivious nature, hold some constellation responsible! My father had a communion with my mother under the impelling force of a wild, lustful fancy and the constellation Great Bear being in ascendance. I came to see the light of the world. Consequently I am coarse, licentious and lascivious. Pooh, pooh! By God's foot, even if I had been born (my conception, being extra-marital) under the most benign influence of a constellation in the firmament, I would have been, what I am at this moment. Here comes Edgar—

Enter EDGAR.

and in the very nick of time does he arrive, like the tragic conclusion of an old comedy: depraved melancholy, with a sigh like a Bedlam beggar, that is my catchword. Oh! these eclipses do presage these estrangements and family quarrels. Fa, sol, la, mi.

Edg. How are you here now, brother Edmund, and what serious contemplation keeps you busy?

Edm. I am absorbed in thinking of a prediction, which I read the other day about the disasters that would follow these eclipses.

Edg. Is it not strange enough that you should at all pay your attention towards such matters?

Edm. I can certainly tell you that his (*i.e.*, of the author of these predictions) forecasts are coming out true, only with too unfortunate an accuracy, as we find relation between the son and father quite estranged; death, scarcity, breaking up of old friendship, divisions of the kingdom, threatenings and imprecations against King and noblemen, unreasonable mutual distrust and suspicion, exile of friends, mutinous behaviour in troops, marital breaches and I know not what.

Edg. How long have you been a sectary astronomical ?

Edm. Come, come, when saw you my father last?

Edg. The night gone by.

Edm. Spake you with him ?

Edg. Ay, two hours together.

Edm. Parted you in good terms ? Found you no displeasure in him by word nor countenance ?

Edg. None at all.

Edm. Bethink yourself wherein you may have offended him; and at my entreaty forbear his presence until some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure, which at this instant so rageth in him that with the mischief of your person it would scarcely allay.

Edg. Some villain hath done me wrong.

Edm. That's my fear. I pray you have a continent forbearance till the speed of his rage goes slower, and as I say, retire with me to my lodging, from whence I will fitly bring you to hear my Lord speak. Pray ye go; there's my key. If you stir abroad, go arm'd.

Edg. Arm'd, brother?

Edm. Brother, I advise you to the best. I am no honest man if there be any good meaning toward you ; I have told you what I have seen and heard ; but faintly, nothing like the image and horror of it; pray you, away.

Edg. Shall I hear from you anon ?

Edm. I do serve you in this business.

[*Exit* EDGAR.

Edg. Since when have you been a disciple of astrological teachings?

Edm. Come, come here and tell me when did you see our father last ?

Edg. Last night only did I chance to see him.

Edm. Did you have an occasion to talk to him ?

Edg. Yes and for two hours we kept on talking.

Edm. Did he cordially part with you ? Didn't you find any displeasure either in his speech or in his facial expression ?

Edg. I couldn't discern any sign of displeasure at all.

Edm. Recollect, any time when you may have caused to offend him, and now as I beseech you, keep yourself away from his presence, until some time passes, which should cool down the heat of his wrath that is at this moment so kindled that it would not be appeased even by inflicting injury to your person.

Edg. Surely it is the work of some depraved villain, who should have thus wronged me.

Edm. I am also apprehensive of that. Please restrain your feelings and avoid every chance of meeting him, until the intensity of his wrath is modified, and I want you to listen to my advice, retire yourself into my lodging for some time, from where, I shall so manage that you would be able to overhear my Lord speaking about you and then ascertain the truth of what I say. Please you better proceed to my lodging ; here are the keys. If at all you move about, then be armed while doing so.

Edg. Should I be armed, brother ?

Edm. I advise only as it is best for you. You may doubt my honesty in case his intentions are found to be good in any way. Whatever I saw and heard, I have told you but only in its faint outline, without exaggerations, though an exact description is sure to fill you with horrors. I implore you to go to my lodging.

Edg. Shall you communicate something to me, presently?

Edm. You should feel assured that your interests are quite safe in my hands.

[*Exit* EDGAR.

A credulous father! and a brother noble,
Whose nature is so far from doing harms
That he suspects none; on whose foolish honesty
My practices ride easy!—I see the business.—
Let me, if not by birth, have lands by wit:
All with me's meet that I can fashion fit.
[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—[*A Room in the* DUKE OF ALBANY'S PALACE.]
Enter GONERIL, *and* OSWALD, *her steward.*

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman for chiding of his Fool?

Osw. Ay, Madam.

Gon. By day and night, he wrongs me; every hour
He flashes into one gross crime or other
That sets us all at odds: I'll not endure it:
His knights grow riotous, and himself upbraids us
On every trifle. When he returns from hunting
I will not speak with him; say I am sick:
If you come slack of former services,
You shall do well; the fault of it I'll answer.

Osw. He's coming, Madam; I hear him.
[*Horns within.*

Gon. Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question:
If he distaste it, let him to my sister,
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
Not to be over-rul'd. Idle old man,
That still would manage those authorities
That he hath given away! Now, by my life,

A father too ready to believe, and a brother noble, who by his simplicity and straightforwardness of nature is so harmless that he won't doubt any one and whose foolish integrity, my treacherous design would find easy to guide. There being no hazards, my way is clear to me and I shall have my share in the estate, if not by birth, at least by ingenuity. To me nothing comes amiss, which I can shape to my own purposes.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—[*A Room in the* DUKE OF ALBANY'S *Palace.*]

Enter GONERIL, *and* OSWALD, *her steward.*

Gon. Did my father strike my gentleman-in-waiting, merely for scolding his Fool ?

Osw. Yes, Madam, he did.

Gon. At all times he does wrong to me. Every hour he bursts out into his violent fits of temper on one trivial offence or the other, setting the entire house topsy-turvy : I am no more prepared to bear this nuisance: His knights are extravagantly tumultuous and he himself severely reproaches us all, provoked by every slightest trifle. When he returns from hunting, I will not greet him and tell him that I feel unwell, and if you show greater apathy and slackness [than you did in your former services) towards him, it would he much better: if he complains of any grievance, for that I will be responsible.

Osw. He is coming, Madam; I hear the sounds, suggestive of his arrival.

[*Horns within.*

Gon. Assume, as much as you like, an appearance of being too tired of his services to attend on him with readiness; you as well as your companions should treat him with neglect, showing how weary you are, of his whimsicalities. Let things come to a crisis, and when an explanation is demanded, I would show a little of how I feel on these matters. If he is utterly dissatisfied with the result, let him better proceed hence to my sister. I can very well anticipate her treatment to him, as we both have identical minds in that regard, and are no more willing to be dictated by his wild caprices. Foolish old man, why should he persistently desire to exercise those privileges, which he surrendered in our favour? Now, I swear by my life,

Old fools are babes again, and must be us'd
With checks as flatteries, when they are seen abus'd.
Remember what I have said.

Osw. Well, Madam.

Gon. And let his knights have colder looks among you;
What grows of it, no matter; advise your fellows so:
I would breed from hence occasions, and I shall,
That I may speak: I'll write straight to my sister
To hold my very course. Prepare for dinner.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—[*A Hall in the same.*]

Enter KENT, *disguised.*

Kent. If but as well I other accents borrow,
That can my speech defuse, my good intent
May carry through itself to that full issue
For which I raz'd my likeness. Now, banished Kent,
If thou canst serve where thou dost stand condemn'd,
So may it come, thy master, whom thou lov'st,
Shall find thee full of labours.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights *and* Attendants.

Lear. Let me not stay a jot for dinner: go get it ready.

[*Exit an* Attendant.

How now? What art thou?

Kent. A man, Sir.

Lear. What dost thou profess? What would'st thou with us?

Kent. I do profess to be no less than I seem; to serve him truly that will put me in trust; to love him that is honest; to converse with him that is wise, and says little; to fear judgment; to fight when I can not choose; and to eat no fish.

Lear. What art thou?

these foolish old men, as affected by their dotage, are once again babes and they should be treated as such, by being humoured by flatteries and scorned when they are seen to be deceived with them. Make it a point to remember, what I have told you.

Osw. Well, Madam I will do, as you desire.

Gon. And let his knights, too, be treated with less warmth and alacrity of welcome than formerly. Don't trouble yourself as to what consequences may follow; better leave that to me. Instruct your fellow-servants to that purpose. My object in having you behave in this manner is to afford myself an opportunity (in his complaints) of speaking out my mind on the subject, and such an opportunity I shall gain in this way. I will write to my sister to pursue exactly the same course, as I have followed. Prepare for dinner.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—[*A hall in the same.*]

Enter KENT, *disguised.*

Kent. If only I am able to modify my natural voice, so as to disguise it, my good object, *viz.*, to attend on my King and master still more effectively, for which I obliterated my former appearance, may brilliantly succeed. Now, banished Kent, if you can manage to serve him, by whom you have been condemned to exile, it may so happen that your most beloved master shall find you most zealous in your services to him.

Horns within. Enter LEAR, Knights *and* Attendants.

Lear. I cannot keep on waiting even a moment for dinner: go prepare for it.

[*Exit an* Attendant.

How are you here now and who are you?

Kent. I am a man, Sir.

Lear. What is your profession? What would you want from us at this moment?

Kent. What I positively assert is quite in keeping with my appearance. I would truly serve him that entrust me with any important business; I would talk to one who is wise and speaks least; the fear of last judgment guides me; I would take to fighting, when no alternative but to that is left and I would not eat fish.

Lear. What kind of person are you?

Kent. A very honest-hearted fellow, and as poor as the King.

Lear. If thou be'st as poor for a subject, as he is for a King, thou art poor enough. What would'st thou?

Kent. Service.

Lear. Who would'st thou serve?

Kent. You.

Lear. Dost thou know me, fellow?

Kent. No, Sir; but you have that in your countenance which I would fain call master.

Lear. What's that?

Kent. Authority.

Lear. What services canst thou do?

Kent. I can keep honest counsel, ride, run, mar a curious tale in telling it, and deliver a plain message bluntly; that which ordinary men are fit for, I am qualified in, and the best of me is diligence.

Lear. How old are you?

Kent. Not so young, Sir, to love a woman for singing, nor so old to dote on her for anything; I have years on my back forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; thou shall serve me; if I like thee no worse after dinner I will not part from thee yet. Dinner, ho! dinner! Where's my knave? my Fool? Go you and call my Fool hither.

[*Exit an* Attendant.

Enter OSWALD.

You, you, sirrah, where's my daughter?

Osw. So please you,— [*Exit*.

Lear. What says the fellow there? Call the clotpoll back.

[*Exit a* Knight.

Kent. I am a very conscientious fellow and as poor as the King himself.

Lear. If you are eally as poor in your capacity as is a King in his own, you are extremely poor. Say, what is your desire?

Kent. I have my services to offer.

Lear. Whom would you serve?

Kent. I would serve you.

Lear. Do you know who I am, fellow?

Kent. I don't know, Sir, but you are endowed with something in your bearing, which would let me gladly call you a master.

Lear. What is that something, you find in me?

Kent. That is authority.

Lear. What services are you capable of doing?

Kent. I can honestly keep a secret; I can ride and run; I can spoil an elaborate story in relating it; and deliver a straightforward message candidly. I am suited for all that ordinary men find themselves fit, and, above all, I am extraordinarily industrious.

Lear. How old are you?

Kent. I am not so young, Sir, as to indulge in loving a woman for singing, nor I am so old that I shall be foolishly fond of her for anything. I am past forty-eight.

Lear. Follow me; it is quite likely that I may engage you in my services. If after dinner, my liking for you remains unchanged, I would not leave you. Is our dinner ready? Hoa! Where's our dinner? Where is my boy? Where has my Fool gone? Go hence and bring my Fool into my presence.

[*Exit an* Attendant.

Enter OSWALD.

You, you, fellow, where has my daughter gone?

Osw. Excuse me, sir,— [*Exit.*

Lear. What does that fellow speak, there? Call the blockhead here again.

[*Exit a* Knight.

Where's my Fool, ho? I think the world's asleep.

Re-enter Knight.

How now? where's that mongrel?

Knight. He says, my Lord, your daughter is not well.

Lear. Why came not the slave back to me when I call'd him?

Knight. Sir, he answered me in the roundest manner, he would not.

Lear. He would not?

Knight. My Lord, I know not what the matter is; but to my judgment, your Highness is not entertain'd with that ceremonious affection as you were wont; there's a great abatement of kindness appears as well in the general dependants as in the Duke himself also and your daughter.

Lear. Ha! Say'st thou so?

Knight. I beseech you, pardon me, my Lord, if I be mistaken; for my duty can be silent when I think your Highness wrong'd.

Lear. Thou but rememb'rest me of mine own conception: I have perceived a most faint neglect of late; which I have rather blamed as mine own jealous curiosity than as a very pretence and purpose of unkindness; I will look further into 't. But where's my Fool? I have not seen him this two days.

Knight. Since my young Lady's going into France, Sir, the Fool hath much pined away.

Lear. No more of that: I have noted it well. Go you, and tell my daughter I would speak with her.

[*Exit an* Attendant.

Go you, call hither my Fool.

[*Exit another* Attendant.

Re-enter OSWALD.

O! you, sir, come you hither, sir,
Who am I, sir?

Osw. My Lady's father.

Where is my Fool, ho? Who is there? Is all the world asleep?

Re-enter Knight.

What now? Where is that churlish cur?

Knight. He informs, my Lord, that your daughter feels unwell.

Lear. Why didn't the slave come back particularly, when I called him ?

Knight. Sir, he responded to me in the plainest way, least concealing his rudeness that he won't come.

Lear. What ! would he not come ?

Knight. What is the crux of the matter, I don't know my Lord, but in my opinion your Highness is not being accorded that ceremonious love with which you were once accustomed to be treated. Even in the behaviour of general attendants of the Duke and your daughter, it is seen that generosity has been considerably diminished.

Lear. Ha! How do you say that?

Knight. I beg to be pardoned, my Lord, in case I have committed any mistake, but when something wrong is done against you, my sense of duty impels me to speak.

Lear. You remind me of what I myself had thought of. I too have perceived quite recently imperceptible but great coldness in them, which I have attributed to my own extraordinary scrupulousness instead of finding out the actual intention and the purpose of this unkindness. I promise you to look further into the matter. But where has my Fool gone? I haven't seen him for the last two days.

Knight. Ever since the departure of my young Lady to France, Sir, the Fool has been much aggrieved.

Lear. Don't talk to me of that; I have already noted it but too well. You better go and tell my daughter that I desire to speak to her. [*Exit an* Attendant.

You go and bring my Fool here.

[*Exit another* Attendant.

Re-enter OSWALD.

O! you, fellow, don't you come here, Sir? Do you know, who I am ?

Osw. You are my lady's father.

Lear. "My Lady's father!" my Lord's knave: you whoreson dog! you slave! you cur!

Osw. I am none of these, my Lord; I beseech your pardon.

Lear. Do you bandy looks with me, you rascal?

[*Striking him.*

Osw. I'll not be strucken, my Lord.

Kent. Nor tripp'd neither, you base football player.

[*Tripping up his heels.*

Lear. I thank thee, fellow; thou serv'st me, and I'll love thee.

Kent. Come, Sir, arise, away! I'll teach you differences: away, away! If you will measure your lubber's length again, tarry; but away! Go to; have you wisdon? so.

[*Exit* OSWALD.

Lear. Now, my friendly knave, I thank thee: there's earnest of thy service. [*Give* KENT *money.*

Enter FOOL.

Fool. Let me hire him too: here's my coxcomb.

[*Offers* KENT *his cap.*

Lear. How now, my pretty knave! how dost thou?

Fool. Sirrah, you were best take my coxcomb.

Lear. Why, Fool?

Fool. Why? for taking one's part that's out of favour. Nay, and thou canst not smile as the wind sits, thou'lt catch cold shortly: there, take my coxcomb. Why, this fellow has banish'd two on's daughters and did the third a blessing against his will: if thou follow him, thou must needs wear my coxcomb. How now, Nuncle! would I had two coxcombs and two daughters!

Lear. Why, my boy?

Lear. "My Lady's father !" my Lord's knave: you bastard dog ! you slave ! you churlish fellow !

Osw. I refuse to be called by these names, as I am none of these, my Lord, I, however, beg to be pardoned by you.

Lear. How do you dare meet my look of displeasure with such an impudent assurance? [*Striking him*.

Osw. I am not willing to be struck, my Lord.

Kent. I suppose you will say that you will not allow yourself to be tripped up, as one trips up an opponent at football, you mean football player ! [*Tripping up his heels*.

Lear. You deserve my thanks, fellow; I accept you under my services, and I will have love for you.

Kent. Come, sir, get up and be off. I will teach you your position, enabling you to appreciate the difference between a king and a rascal like yourself. Be away, get yourself from here. Stay a little, only if you wish to be knocked once again, but better leave, this moment only, get out, if you are wise enough, instantly, be off. [Exit *Oswald*]. That is right.

Lear. Now, my friendly fellow, I thank you much and here is your earnest money for being engaged in my service. [*Gives* KENT *money*.

Enter FOOL.

Fool. Let me also hire his services. Here is my coxcomb as a token for your being engaged. [*Offers* KENT *his cap*.

Lear. Now, my pretty boy, how do you feel?

Fool. Sir, it would be best for you to take my cap.

Lear. Why would it be best, Fool?

Fool. Why? by way of gift for taking his part, who is thrown out of favour. Moreover, you can not adjust your smiles with the changing fortunes, as such, you expose yourself to the inclement vagaries of the weather. Here is my coxcomb for you. Why, this fellow has banished two of his daughters and unintentionally blessed the third. If you are required to serve under him, you of necessity should wear my cap. Now, my uncle, if I had two coxcombs and two daughters, it would have been much better.

Lear. Why so, my boy?

Fool. If I gave them all my living, I'd keep my coxcombs myself. There's mine; beg another of thy daughters.

Lear. Take heed, sirrah, the whip.

Fool. Truth's a dog must to kennel; he must be whipp'd out, when lady the brach may stand by the fire and stink.

Lear. A pestilent gall to me!

Fool. Sirrah, I'll teach thee a speech.

Lear. Do.

Fool. Mark it, Nuncle:

Have more than thou showest,
Speak less than thou knowest,
Lend less than thou owest,
Ride more than thou goest,
Learn more than thou trowest,
Set less than thou throwest;
Leave thy drink and thy whore,
And keep in-a-door,
And thou shalt have more
Than two tens to a score.

Kent. This is nothing, Fool.

Fool. Then 'tis like the breath of an unfee'd lawyer; you gave me nothing for't. Can you make no use of nothing, Nuncle?

Lear. Why, no, boy; nothing can be made out of nothing.

Fool. [To Kent] Prithee, tell him, so much the rent of his land comes to; he will not believe a Fool.

Lear. A bitter Fool!

Fool. Dost thou know the difference, my boy, between a bitter fool and a sweet one?

Fool. If I happened to surrender all my fortunes in their favour, at least, I would keep my caps with me, they would certainly be mine. Beg from another of your daughters.

Lear. Mind your words, boy, lest you should be whipped.

Fool. Truth is a dog and must be off to his kennel. He must be whipped out when the Lady hound is fiery and outrageous.

Lear. A plague take me for my folly.

Fool. Sir, I shall like to teach you one speech.

Lear. Do that.

Fool. Mark it, Uncle: Let your wealth be more than what you parade before the people of the world. Don't be garrulous in telling others what you know. Don't lend more than what you possess. Ride more than you walk. Don't believe all you hear, unless you ascertain it. Stake a smaller sum than you hope to win. Give up drinks as well as your strumpt, and keep indoors. And you shall have more than two tens to a score.

Kent. This is nonsense. Fool.

Fool. As you gave me nothing for it, you can scarcely expect from me anything worthwhile, any more than you would expect an opinion from a lawyer without paying his due fees. Can't you make any use of nothing, Uncle?

Lear. How is that possible, boy? Only nothing is capable of being made out of nothing.

Fool. [To Kent] Please tell him what revenues would his land yield to him. He won't believe in whatever a Fool says.

Lear. You are indeed a bitter Fool !

Fool. Do you know, fellow, the distinction between a bitter Fool and a sweet Fool ?

Lear. No, lad; teach me.

Fool. That lord that counsell'd thee
To give away thy land.
Come place him here by me—
Do thou for him stand:
The sweet and bitter fool
Will presently appear;
The one in motley here,
The other found out there.

Lear. Dost thou call me fool, boy?

Fool. All thy other titles thou hast given away; that thou wast born with.

Kent. This is not altogether fool, my Lord.

Fool. No, faith, lords and great men will not let me, if I had a monopoly out, they would have part on't: and ladies too, they will not let me have all the fool to myself; they'll be snatching. Nuncle, give me an egg, and I'll give thee two crowns.

Lear. What two crowns, shall they be?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg i' th' middle and eat up the meat, the two crowns of the egg. When thou clovest the crown i' th' middle, and gav'st away both parts, thou bor'st thine ass on thy back o'er the dirt: thou hadst little wit in thy bald crown when thou gav'st thy golden one away. If I speak like myself in this, let him be whipp'd that first finds it so. [*Sings.*

Fools had ne'er less grace in a year;
For wise men are grown foppish,
And know not how their wits to wear,
Their manners are so apish.

Lear. When were you wont to be so full of songs, sirrah?

Lear. No, boy; I don't, tell me of that.

Fool. That lord, who advised you for renouncing your land—either bring him or else you yourself impersonate him and the difference between a sweet fool and a bitter one would at once be obvious. The former in his party-coloured dress is here, while the latter would be found there.

Lear. Do you dare call me a fool, boy ?

Fool. As you have been divested of all other titles, that alone remains congenital.

Kent. He is not entirely a fool, my Lord.

Fool. No, by God's faith, lords and great men would not let me remain in the sole possession of folly. If a monopoly had been granted me and I were the only licensed Fool, even then they would persist to claim their share of folly, and as for ladies, they too would scramble for their own share, without letting all my folly be retained with me. Uncle, give me an egg and I will give you two crowns in return.

Lear. What kind of two crowns would they be ?

Fool. Why, after I have cut the egg into two, I eat up the vitellus part and thereafter the crowns of the egg would be left. You cut your crown into two parts, both of which you have given away, and now instead of riding your ass, you carry it on your head while crossing through a dirty street, to save its feet from being dirtied. You had hardly any wisdom left in your empty brain when you parted with the golden crown. now I speak like a Fool, foolishly, let not me be whipped, but him, who just finds it to be truly, as I have said. [*Sings*.

There was never a time, when fools were less in favour than now, and the reason is that they were never so little wanted as now, because the wise men, without knowing the true wit and being fantastical, are replacing them.

Lear. Since when have you been accustomed so much to singing songs, boy ?

Fool. I have used it, Nuncle, e'er since thou mad'st thy daughters thy mothers; for when thou gav'st them the rod and put'st down thine own breeches. [*Sings.*

Then they for sudden joy did weep,
And I for sorrow sung,
That such a king should play bo-peep,
And go the fools among.

Prithee, Nuncle, keep a schoolmaster that can teach thy Fool to lie: I would fain learn to lie.

Lear. An you lie, sirrah, we'll have you whipp'd.

Fool. I marvel what kin thou and thy daughters are: they'll have me whipp'd for speaking true, thou'lt have me whipp'd for lying; and sometimes I am whipp'd for holding my peace. I had rather be any kind o' thing than a fool; and yet I would not be thee, Nuncle; thou hast pared thy wit o' both sides, and left nothing i' th' middle. Here comes one o' the parings.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. How now, daughter! what makes that frontlet on? You are too much of late i' th' frown.

Fool. Thou wast a pretty fellow when thou hadst no need to care for her frowning; now thou art an O without a figure. I am better than thou art now: I am a Fool, thou art nothing. [*To* GONERIL] Yes, forsooth, I will hold my tongue; so your face bids me, though you say nothing. Mum, mum:

He that keeps nor crust nor crumb,
Weary of all, shall want some.—

That's a sheal'd peascod. [*Pointing to* LEAR.

Fool. I have indulged in it as a hobby, Uncle, ever since you made your daughters your mothers, by investing them with the power of punishment. When you supplied them with the rod, putting down your own guns, [*singing*] "they wept out of sudden joy and I out of sorrow sang, that a king should play such a game indulging in childish pranks and going among the fools." I pray you, Uncle, keep a pedagogue, who would teach me how to tell a lie which I would gladly learn.

Lear. If you tell a lie, boy, you will be whipped.

Fool. I wonder at the relationship, existing between you and your daughters. They will have me whipped for speaking the truth, you will have me whipped for telling a lie and sometimes I am whipped for my reticence. I would rather be prepared to become anything else than a fool, but still I won't become you, Uncle; you have cut off your wit, both the sides so as to leaving nothing, in the middle. Here comes one of the parts.

Enter GONERIL.

Lear. Now, my daughter, what is that frown doing on your brow? Quite recently you have been too much given to frowning.

Fool. You were quite a fortunate fellow, when you were not required to bother about her frowning, but now you are merely a cipher without its value-giving digit, placed before it. I am much better than what you are now. I am at least a Fool, whereas you are nothing, a nonentity. [*To* GONERIL]. Yes, I will certainly observe silence, though it is not your verbal command, yet your fiery countenance commands me to that effect. Silence, silence shall I be. He, who possesses neither the exterior crust nor the interior substance, shall soon be exhausted and feel that something is wanting, as he is reduced to the state of pod, emptied of its peas. [*Pointing to* LEAR.

Gon. Not only, Sir, this your all-licens'd Fool,
But others of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel, breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots. Sir,
To have found a self redress; but now grow fearful,
By what yourself too late have spoke and done,
That you protect this course, and put it on
By your allowance; which if you should, the fault
Would not 'scape censure, nor the redresses sleep,
Which, in the tender of a wholesome weal,
Might in their working do you that offence,
Which else were shame, that even necessity
Will call discreet proceeding.

Fool. For you know, Nuncle,
The hedge-sparrow fed the cuckoo, so long
That it had its head bit off by its young.
So, out went the candle, and we were left darkling.

Lear. Are you our daughter ?

Gon. I would, you would make use of your good wisdom,
Whereof I know you are fraught; and put away,
These dispositions, which of late transport you
From what you rightly are.

Fool. May not an ass know when a cart draws the horse? Whoop, Jug! I love thee.

Lear. Does any here know me? This is not Lear:
Does Lear walk thus? Speak thus? Where are his eyes?
Either his notion weakens, his discernings
Are lethargied—Ha! waking? 'tis not so.
Who is it that can tell me, who I am?

Fool. Lear's shadow.

Gon. Sir, not only this extravagant and licentious Fool of yours but most of your other impudent attendants also frequently find fault with the household arrangements, quarrel and excessively indulge in intolerable riots. Sir, I had thought that my earlier remonstration should have been enough in realizing my hope to find relief in this situation, but now I am reasonably apprehensive about what you yourself quite recently spoke and did. In fact, you have thrown the shield of your sanction over this kind of prevailing behaviour and instigate it further by your approval. If you should do that your fault would not go unreproved, nor shall I hesitate in redressing the wrongs by checking your knights from being riotous. This disciplinary measure, prompted by my strong desire to have a healthy state of affairs, would be drastic. In normal circumstances, I should be ashamed in resorting to them and my measures must necessarily offend you, and accuse me of lacking in filial duty, but in fact they would be merely a prudential step, which the exigencies of the moment force me to take.

Fool. Don't you know, Uncle, the foster-mother, hedge-sparrow fed and nourished the cuckoo so long that the young creature, under the regrettable necessity bit off the head of its mother? So the candle was put out leaving us behind in the dark.

Lear. Are you our daughter?

Gon. I wish that you would make use of the wisdom, with which you are equipped and get rid of our temperamental fits, that entirely alter you from what you really are.

Fool. May not even the most stupid person see when the situation takes such a preposterous turn, as the cart drawing the horse? Ho! Jug! So much that I love you.

Lear. Does anybody know me here? This is not Lear: Does he walk thus? Does he speak so? Where are his eyes? Either his mental powers are growing weak, or his power of distinguishing the real from the imaginary has become torpid. Ha! Am I awake? How can it be so? Is there anybody to tell me who I am?

Fool. You are Lear's shadow.

Lear. I would learn that; for by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge and reason, I should be false persuaded I had daughters.

Fool. Which they will make an obedient father.

Lear. Your name, fair gentlewoman?

Gon. This admiration, Sir, is much o' th' savour
Of other your new pranks. I do beseech you
To understand my purposes aright:
As you are old and reverend, should be wise.
Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disorder'd, so debosh'd, and bold,
That this our court, infected with their manners,
Shows like a riotous inn: epicurism and lust
Makes it more like a tavern or a brothel
Than a grac'd palace. The shame itself doth speak
For instant remedy; be then desir'd
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainders, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
Which know themselves and you.

Lear. Darkness and devils!
Saddle my horses; call my train together.
Degenerate bastard! I'll not trouble thee:
Yet have I left a daughter.

Gon. You strike my people, and your disorder'd rabble
Make servants of their betters.

Enter ALBANY.

Lear. Woe that too late repents; O! Sir, are you come?
Is it your will? Speak, sir. Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,
Than the sea-monster.

Lear. I wish to make that fact—I am Lear's shadow—clear to myself. If I were to be judged by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge and reason, they persuade me to think that I am Lear himself in flesh and blood, and have daughters, which notion is now false, as I am reduced to his shadow.

Fool. You will be reduced to a shadow by them, only as you are an obedient father to your daughters.

Lear. By what name shall you be called, fair gentlewoman ?

Gon. This astonishment, Sir, smacks in some degree of your other recent caprices. I entreat you to understand my intentions, in whatever I have hitherto spoken, rightly. Old and venerable as you are, it is expected of you to be wise. You have here in your retinue, as many as a hundred knights and squires, who being all disorderly, debauched and audacious, so much so that this palace of ours, contaminated by their ill-manners, appears quite like a riotous and tumultuous inn; gluttony and lewdness makes it more like a tavern or a brothel, than a palace, marked by stately decorum and dignified by the presence of a sovereign. The very sense of shame calls for an instantaneous remedy. You then are requested by her, who otherwise will take what she asks, to reduce your train in number and let the rest of the knights who would still continue to serve you as your dependants, be such as behoving your age in conformity with your position as well as their own.

Lear. The forces of darkness and devil! Saddle my horses; call all my knights together, depraved bastard, I would not trouble you any more. Though you have proved to be so, I have still a daughter who, unlike you, will surely behave as a daughter to me.

Gon. You strike my people and the knights of your riotous crowd treat, as servants, even those who are in every way their superiors.

Enter ALBANY.

Lear. Woe to him, who finds his mistake too late to be remedied. O! Sir, have you come? Is, whatever is being done, ratified by your will? Speak out, Sir. Prepare my horses. Ingratitude, you are a marble-breasted devil and look more abominable, when you show yourself in a child than in the sea-monster.

Alb. Pray, Sir, be patient.

Lear. [*To* GONERIL] Detested kite! thou liest.
My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
That all particulars of duty know,
And in the most exact regard support
The worships of their name. O most small fault,
How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
Which, like an engine, wrench'd my fame of nature
From the fix'd place, drew from my heart all love,
And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
Beat at this gate, that let thy folly in [*Striking his head.*
And thy dear judgment out! Go, go, my people.

Alb. My Lord, I am guiltless, as I am ignorant of what hath moved you.

✓ *Lear.* It may be so, my Lord.
Hear, Nature, hear! dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase,
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen, that it may live
And be a thward disnatur'd torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth,
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks,
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!—Away, away! [*Exit.*

Alb. Now, gods that we adore, whereof comes this?

Gon. Never afflict yourself to know more of it:
But let his disposition have that scope
As dotage gives it.

Re-enter LEAR.

Lear. What, fifty of my followers at a clap! Within a fortnight!

Alb. I implore you, Sir, to be patient.

Lear. [*To* GONERIL] Despicable kite, you tell a lie. The knights of my train are men of choicest qualities and rarest talents and thoroughly know about every detail connected with their duties, and even in the minutest particulars, they scrupulously maintain their dignity. O, most small fault, how much hideous did you appear in Cordelia, that (fault) wrenched and twisted my natural disposition so as to make a repulsive distortion of myself, and which withdrew all my love from the heart, augmenting its bitterness. O Lear, Lear, Lear! beat this brain, which allowed your folly to come into it.

[*Striking his head.*

and turned out your precious judgment! Go, go, call the fellows of my train.

Alb. My Lord, I am not at fault, as I am utterly ignorant about what has roused your anger to that degree.

Lear. It may rightly be so. Hear, Nature, dear goddess, hear! If you intended to make this creature fruitful, now suspend your purpose! Instil barrenness into her womb and dry up the organs of reproductivity in her so that from her degraded body, a babe to honour her may never spring. If she is destined to become a mother, let her child be constituted by spite and malice and it may live to be perverse and unnatural, so as to torture her and let it impress wrinkles in her youthful brow, with falling tears, wearing away the furrows in her cheeks. Expose all her maternal cares and proofs of affection to contemptuous laughter so that she may realize, how much sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have an ungrateful child. Away, be away.

[*Exit.*

Alb. Now, by gods that we worship, what is the reason for his bitter wrath ?

Gon. Never bother yourself about finding out more in this regard, but let his present mood have such free-play as he, in his dotage, chooses to give.

Re-enter LEAR.

Lear. What! fifty of my knights to be reduced at one stroke and that also within a fortnight's time.

Alb. What's the matter, Sir?

Lear. I'll tell thee. [*To* GONERIL.] Life and death! I am asham'd.
That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus,
That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
Should make thee worth them. Blasts and fogs upon thee!
Th' untented woundings of a father's curse
Pierce every sense about thee! Old fond eyes,
Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck ye out,
And cast you, with the waters that you loose,
To temper clay. Yea, is't come to this?
Ha! let it be so: I have another daughter
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
She'll flay thy wolvish visage. Thou shalt find
That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
I have cast off for ever.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, KENT, *and* Attendants.

Gon. Do you mark that?

Alb. I cannot be so partial, Goneril,
To the great love I bear you—

Gon. Pray you, content. What, Oswald, ho!
[*To the Fool.*] You, Sir, more knave than a fool, after your master.

Fool. Nuncle Lear, Nuncle Lear! tarry, take the Fool with thee.
A fox, when one has caught her,
And such a daughter,
Should sure to the slaughter,
If my cap would buy a halter;
So the Fool follows after.

[*Exit.*

Gon. This man hath had good counsel. A hundred knights!
'Tis politic and safe to let him keep
At point a hundred knights; yes that on every dream,
Each buzz, each fancy, each complaint, dislike,
He may enguard his dotage with their powers,
And hold our lives in mercy. Oswald, I say!—

Alb. What is the matter, Sir ?

Lear. I will tell you, [*To* GONERIL] Whether alive or dead, I feel ashamed that you have power thus to shake my manhood that these hot tears gush from my eyes, as if you were worthy of them, though in fact they are too precious to be so wasted, on a wretched creature like yourself. May you be overcome by the fury of blasts and fogs ! May every organ of feeling in you be pierced by a father's curse, beyond all cure, your wounds being too deep to be cleaned by a roll of linen. Old foolish eyes ! if you are foolish enough to weep for this cause, I will pluck you out and throw you with the waters that you may waste to moisten clay. Yes, it has come to this miserable extent. Ha ! Let it be so, for I have another daughter, who is surely generous and comforting. When she hears of this treatment of yours, she would with her nails, strip your ravenous face of its skin. You would find that I will resume the power as a King, about which you have fondly thought I threw it away once for all.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, KENT, *and* Attendants.

Gon. Have you marked how indiscreetly he departed ?

Alb. I can't be prejudiced in my great love for you that I may be blind to your faults.—

Gon. I implore you to be satisfied and probe no more into the affairs. Where are you, Oswald; ho! [*To the Fool.*] You, Sir, like your master are more of a deceitful fellow than a fool.

Fool. Uncle Lear, Uncle Lear, wait until you take the Fool with you. A fox, when she is caught and such an ungrateful daughter should surely be hanged ; I wish I could exchange my cap for a halter. Thus the Fool follows you hence.

[*Exit.*

Gon. I have given this man good advice. What ! a hundred knights ! It is certainly prudent and safe to let him keep a hundred knights in armed readiness, so that on every dream, on each whisper and rumour, on each fancy, clamour and dislike, he may use them to protect himself in his feeble old age, strengthening his every humour so as to find refuge in his wild caprices, and thus doing, he shall keep us all at his mercy. Oswald, where have you gone?

Alb. Well, you may fear too far.

Gon. Safer than trust too far.
Let me still take away the harms I fear,
Not fear still to be taken: I know his heart.
What he hath utter'd I have writ my sister;
If she sustain him and his hundred knights,
When I have show'd th' unfitness.—

Re-enter OSWALD.

How, now, Oswald!
What, have you write that letter to my sister?

Osw. Ay, Madam.

Gon. Take you some company, and away to horse:
Inform her full of my particular fear;
And thereto add such reasons of your own
As may compact it more. Get you gone,
And hasten your return.

[*Exit* OSWALD.

No, no, my Lord,
This milky gentleness and course of yours
Though I condemn not, yet under pardon,
You are much more ataxt for want of wisdom
Than prais'd for harmful mildness.

Alb. How far your eyes may pierce I cannot tell:
Striving to better, oft we mar, what's well.

Gon. Nay, then—

Alb. Well, well; th' event.

[*Exeunt.*

Alb. Well, all your fears carry you but too far.

Gon. It is safer to be apprehensive rather than being credulous. Let me always clear those obstacles which jeopardize my path, as I refuse to live under the perpetual terror of being caught into them. I know what his heart is capable of. Whatever he has spoken. I have written an account thereof to my sister. When once I have shown her the impropriety of maintaining a hundred knights, there is no reason why at all should she adhere to that.

Re-enter OSWALD.

What do you say now, Oswald ? Have you drafted that letter to my sister, about which I had instructed you ?

Osw. Yes, Madam, I have.

Gon. Take some campanion, ride quickly and be off on your journey. Inform my sister fully about my personal dread and, besides, furnish your information with reasons, so as to confirm and make compatible, whatever I said. Start at once and come back quickly.

[*Exit* OSWALD.

No, no, my Lord ! this mild and gentle way of your proceeding—though I don't censure it, yet I would be excused for saying—ill much more be blamed by the onlookers, for lack of your wisdom than praised by them for you milky gentleness, which is bound to produce an undesirable result.

Alb. I can't say how far your eyes can peep into the future, but it's often true that in our attempt to do better, we may injure something that is already good.

Gon. No, that is not applicable in my case.

Alb. Well, well, let us wait and see how things turn out.

[*Exeunt*.

Scene V.—[*Court before the same.*]

Enter Lear, Kent *and* Fool.

Lear. Go you before to Gloucester with these letters: Acquaint my daughter no further with anything you know than comes from her demand out of the letter. If your diligence be not speedy, I shall be there afore you.

Kent. I will not sleep, my Lord, till I have delivered your letter. [*Exit.*

Fool. If man's brains were in's heels, were't not in danger of kibes?

Lear. Ay, boy.

Fool. Then, I prithee, be merry: thy wit shall not go slipshod.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha!

Fool Shalt see thy other daughter wilt use thee kindly; for though she's as like this as a crab's like an apple, yet I can tell what I can tell.

Lear. What canst tell, boy?

Fool. She will taste as like this as a crab does to a crab. Thou canst tell why one's nose stands i' th' middle on's face?

Lear. No.

Fool. Why, to keep one's eyes of either side's nose, that what a man cannot smell out, he may spy into.

SCENE V.—[*Court before the Same.*]

Enter LEAR, KENT *and* FOOL.

Lear. You first go with this letter to the city of Gloucester. Deliver it to my daughter but do not tell her anything more in regard to what has happened, than is necessary in answering questions, which may arise out of my letter, after her perusal thereof. If you are not keen about your speed, I might reach earlier than you.

Kent. I will not have rest, my Lord, until and unless I have delivered your Highness's letter.

[*Exit.*

Fool. If a man has no more wit than is necessary to go fast, may he not get chilblains ?

Lear. Yes, boy.

Fool. Then, I pray you to be cheerful, because you show that you don't have wit and as such you won't have chilblains' compelling you to wear the slippers.

Lear. Ha, ha, ha !

Fool. You hope to be received and treated by your other daughter affectionately, though she differs from her sister no more than a crab differs from an apple, both being alike in sourness. I can tell you what I propose.

Lear. What can you tell, boy ?

Fool. She in her treatment to you will be as sourly as her sister, both being equally sour-tempered. By the way, can you tell me for what reason does a man's nose stand in the middle of his face ?

Lear. No, I can't.

Fool. Why, it is to keep his eyes on the either side of his nose, so that whatever he fails to smell out, he may detect through his eyes.

Lear. I did her wrong.

Fool. Canst tell how an oyster makes his shell?

Lear. No.

Fool. Nor I neither; but I can tell why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why?

Fool. Why, to put's head in; not to give it away to his daughters, and leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will forget my nature. So kind a father!—Be my horses ready?

Fool. The asses are gone about 'em. The reason why the seven stars are no more than seven is a pretty reason.

Lear. Because they are not eight?

Fool. Yes, indeed: thou would'st make a good fool.

Lear. To take't again perforce! Monster ingratitude!

Fool. If thou wert my fool, Nuncle, I'd have thee beaten for being old before thy time.

Lear. How's that?

Fool. Thou shouldst not have been old till thou hadst been wise.

Lear. O! let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven! Keep me in temper; I would not be mad!

Enter Gentleman.

How now? Are the horses ready?

Gent. Ready, my Lord.

Lear. Come, boy.

Fool. She that's a maid now, and laughs at my departure,
Shall not be a maid long, unless things be cut shorter.

[*Exeunt.*

Lear. I was unjust to her.

Fool. Can you tell me how an oyster makes his shell ?

Lear. No, I can't.

Fool. I myself can't tell that ; but I can tell you why a snail has a house.

Lear. Why does it have ?

Fool. Why, for the simple reason of putting its head inside, unlike you to give it away to his daughters so as to leave his horns without a case.

Lear. I will banish all my thoughts of fatherly love in order to execute cruel vengeance. I have indeed been so kind a father that would receive a treatment, such as this. Are my horses ready ?

Fool. Your long-eared stupid servants have gone to bring them. The reason why the seven pleiades are seven only is an apt one.

Lear. Are they seven, because they are not eight ?

Fool. Yes, indeed ; that is the right reason. You would prove to be a good fool.

Lear. To think that she would forcibly deprive me of enjoying those privileges, which she quite willingly granted me earlier. Ingratitude, you are a monster.

Fool. Had you been my fool, Uncle, I would have beaten you for your being old before it is due.

Lear. How do you explain that ?

Fool. You should not have attained old age before you were wise.

Lear. O, let me not be mad, not mad, merciful heavens, keep me in my normal condition of mind ; I would not be mad!

Enter Gentleman.

What is the news ? Are horses ready by now ?

Gent. Yes, my Lord, they are ready.

Lear. Come, boy, let's move hence.

Fool. The maid who ridicules and sees only the funny side of my gibes without realizing that the King is proceeding on a tragic journey, is such a simpleton, that she, without making a compromise with the situation, won't know how to guard her chastity.

[*Exeunt*

Act II

Scene I.—[*A court within the Castle of the Earl of Gloucester.*]

Enter Edmund *and* Curan, *meeting.*

Edm. Save thee, Curan.

Cur. And you, Sir, I have been with your father and given him notice that the Duke of Cornwall and Regan, his duchess will be here with him this night.

Edm. How comes that ?

Cur. Nay, I know not. You have heard of the news abroad ? I mean the whisper'd ones, for they are yet bu ear-kissing arguments.

Edm. Not I : pray you, what are they ?

Cur. Have you heard of no likely wars toward, 'twixt the Dukes of Cornwall and Albany ?

Edm. Not a word.

Cur. You may do then, in time. Fare you well, Sir.

[*Exit.*

Edm. The Duke be here to-night ! The better ! best !
This weaves itself perforce into my business.
My father hath set guard to take my brother ;
And I have one thing, of a queasy question,
Which I must act. Briefness and Fortune, work !
Brother, a word ; descend : brother, I say !

ACT II

SCENE I.—[*A court within the Castle of the Earl of Gloucester.*]

Enter EDMUND *and* CURAN, *meeting.*

Edm. May God save you, Curan !

Cur. May He also save you, Sir! I have been with your father and informed him that the Duke of Cornwall and his Duchess, Regan, will be coming over here to-night.

Edm. How does it come to that ?

Cur. No, I don't know. Have you not heard, so far, the whispered news, as they are even now ear-kissing themes ?

Edm. I haven't heard at all. Please tell me what they are.

Cur. Have you not heard of the probable wars, impending to be fought between the Duke of Cornwall and that of Albany ?

Edm. I am wholly unaware.

Cur. Then you may be conversant with the affairs in time. May you fare well, Sir. [*Exit.*

Edm. The Duke would be here to-night ! So much the better for my purposes and in fact it is the best thing that could happen. The coming of Duke very well suits to my designs. My father has set guards round the castle with a view to capture my brother, if he shows himself, and I have one thing that needs delicate and skilful handling which I must act upon. May promptitude and good fortune work in my favour! Brother, come, I have something to be communicated to you.

Enter EDGAR.

My father watches : O sir ! fly this place ;
Intelligence is given where you are hid ;
You have now the good advantage of the night.
Have you not spoken 'gainst the Duke of Cornwall ?
He's coming hither, now i' th' night, i' th' haste,
And Regan with him ; have you nothing said
Upon his party 'gainst the Duke of Albany ?
Advise yourself.

Edg. I am sure on't, not a word.

Edm. I hear my father coming ; pardon me ;
In cunning I must draw my sword upon you ;
Draw ; seem to defend yourself ; now quit you well.
Yield ; come before my father. Light, ho ! here !
Fly, brother. Torches ! torches ! so, farewell.
[*Exit* EDGAR.
Some blood drawn on me would beget opinion.
[*Wounds his arm.*
Of my more fierce endeavour : I have seen drunkards
Do more than this in sport. Father ! father !
Stop, stop ! No help ?

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants, *with torches.*

Glou. Now, Edmund, where's the villain ?
Edm. Here stood he in the dark, his sharp sword out,
Mumbling of wicked charms, conjuring the moon
To stand's auspicious mistress.
Glou. But where is he ?
Edm. Look, Sir, I bleed.
Glou. Where is the villain, Edmund ?
Edm. Fled this way, Sir, when by no means he could—

Enter EDGAR

My father is watchful ; O sir, find an escape from here. He has been informed about where you hide yourself. You can well have the vantage of the darkness and night. Don't you have good reason to avoid the Duke of Cornwall ? He is scheduled to arrive here to-night and with great haste, and Regan, too, accompanies him. Consider, whether you have said anything in regard to the position, which he, as a partisan has assumed against the Duke of Albany.

Edg. I am pretty sure that I haven't said a word in this regard.

Edm. I hear the footsteps, suggesting my father's arrival ; excuse me, in pretence I unsheathe my sword to set on you, to avoid the appearance of collusion. You may also draw your sword, and pretend to protect yourself, and now make a vigorous show of fighting. Ho ! here is light, brother, move swiftly hence ; torches, torches are visible, so fare you well.

[*Exit* EDGAR.

A few blood-spots on me would induce the people to believe that I have had a desperate fight :

[*Wounds his arm.*

I have seen the young gallants, sometimes, under the influence of drink, wound stab at their arms, in order to be able to drink the healths of their mistress in blood. Father, father ! Stop, stop here. Oh, helpless that I am !

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants *with torches.*

Glou. Now, Edmund, where has the villain gone ?

Edm. Only a little while ago, here he stood in the dark, with his sharp sword unsheathed, uttering indistinctly the wicked charms, binding by incantation the moon, to assist him, with her favour.

Glou. But where has he left for, now ?

Edm. Look at me, Sir, how I bleed !

Glou. Where has the wretched villain fled ?

Edm. He has escaped through this way, Sir, when by no means he could fulfil his plan of—

Glou. Pursue him, ho! Go after.
[*Exeunt some* Servants.
"By no means" what?

Edm. Persuade me to the murther of your lordship;
But that I told him, the revenging gods
'Gainst Parricides did all the thunder bend;
Spoke with how manifold and strong a bond
The child was bound to th' father; Sir, in fine,
Seeing how loathly opposite I stood
To his unnatural purpose, in fell motion,
With his prepared sword he charges home
My unprovided body, latch'd mine arm;
But when he saw my best alarum'd spirits,
Bold in the quarrel's right, roused to th' encounter,
Or whether gasted by the noise I made,
Full suddenly he fled.

Glou. Let him fly far:
Not in this land shall he remain uncaught;
and found—dispatch. The noble Duke, my master,
My worthy arch and patron, comes to-night:
By his authority I will proclaim it,
That he which finds him shall deserve our thanks,
Bringing the murderous coward to the stake;
He that conceals him, death.

Edm. When I dissuaded him from his intent,
And found him pight to do it, with curst speech
I threaten'd to discover him: he replied,
"Thou unpossessing bastard! Dost thou think,
If I would stand against thee, would the reposure
Of any trust, virtue, or worth in thee
Make thy words faith'd? No: what I should deny,—
As this I would; ay, though didst produce
My very character—I'd turn it all
To thy suggestion, plot, and damned practice:
And thou must make a dullard of the world,
If they not thought the profits of my death
Were very pregnant and potential spurs
To make thee seek it."

Glou. O strange and fast'ned villain!
Would he deny his letter, said he? I never got him.
[*Tucket within.*

Glou. Catch hold of him ; ho, follow him wherever he would. [*Exeunt some* Servants.

'By no means', what did you mean to say ?

Edm. His plan has been to instigate me to the murder of your lordship, but what I told him was that the gods, with all their thunder, aimed to be revengeful against the murder of the parents by their children, and that in how many ways, the strong relationship existed between the father and his son, the latter being highly obliged to the former. Sir, in substance, seeing how strongly and abhorrently did I oppose him, his position being entirely unnatural, with a venomous attack, he with his already drawn sword, stabbed at me, defenceless, as I was, thus wounding my arm, but when he saw that all my courage, emboldened by the justice of my cause roused me to face his challenge, or perhaps due to the fact that he was frightened, he at once took to his heels.

Glou. Let him move, wherever he pleases, but in this land, he shall not remain uncaught, and once he is detected, kill him. The noble Duke, my master, my worthy chief patron, is scheduled to arrive here to-night. As authorised by him, I will proclaim to this effect that one who finds out, and brings that abominable coward to the stake, shall deserve our thanks, and one who conceals him shall be put to death.

Edm. When I persuaded him against his purpose and found him fully determined to fulfil the same, I, showering reproaches and curses on him, threatened to expose his designs whereupon he replied : "You treacherous bastard ! Do you think any trust reposed in you, or any virtue or worth supposed to belong to you, would cause your words to be believed ? This is what I should refuse you; I would certainly do that. Even though you produced the letter in my own handwriting, I would make it seem only as your evil instigation, plot and treacherous device, and you must suppose the entire world to be idiots, if they did not see that the profits of my death are so great that the spurs to make you seek it are most powerful and teem with incitements thereto."

Glou. O ! monstrous and hardened villain ! Would he decline that he himself wrote that letter ? He is no son of mine. [*Tucket within.*

Hark! the Duke's trumpets. I know not why he comes.—
All ports I'll bar; the villain shall not 'scape;
The Duke must grant me that: besides his picture
I will send far and near, that all the kingdom
May have due note of him; and of my land,
Loyal and natural boy, I'll work the means
To make thee capable.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Attendants.

Corn. How now, my noble friend! since I came hither,
Which I can call but now, I have heard strange news.

Reg. If it be true, all vengeance comes too short
Which can pursue th' offender. How dost my Lord?

Glou. O! Madam my old heart is crack'd, it's crack'd.

Reg. What! did my father's godson seek your life?
He whom my father nam'd, your Edgar?

Glou. O! Lady, shame would have it hid.

Reg. Was he not companion with the riotous knights that tended upon my father?

Glou. I know not, Madam; 'tis too bad, too bad.

Edm. Yes, Madam, he was of that consort.

Reg. No marvel then though he were ill affected;
'Tis they have put him on the old man's death,
To have th' expense and waste of his revenues.
I have this present evening from my sister
Been well informed of them, and with such cautions
That if they come to sojourn at my house,
I'll not be there.

Corn. Nor I, assure thee, Regan.
Edmund, I hear that you have shown your father
A childlike office.

Edm. It was my duty, Sir.

Glou. He did bewray his practice; and receiv'd
This hurt you see, striving to apprehend him.

Corn. Is he pursued?

Glou. Ay, my good Lord.

Listen to the Duke's trumpets ; I know not why for he comes.—I will have all the seaports closed and see that the villain shall not escape. The Duke cannot possibly refuse me in that regard. Besides, I will send his picture far and near, so that the entire kingdom may have the requisite basis to identify him. As regards my land, my loyal and natural son, I would evolve means, enabling you to inherit it.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Attendants.

Corn. Now, my noble friend, since I came here, I well remember to have heard some strange tidings.

Reg. If that happens to be true, all revenge would be but inadequate to this offence. How do you feel, my Lord ?

Glou. O ! Madam, old as I am, my heart is broken.

Reg. What ! was my father's godson, named by the former, your Edgar out against your life ?

Glou. O ! Lady, Lady, the very sense of shame would bid me to hide this fact.

Reg. Was he not a companion to the train of riotous knights, attending on my father ?

Glou. I don't know that, Madam, but then it's extremely bad.

Edm. Yes, Madam, he was one of that company.

Reg. It's no more surprise that he should be treacherously disposed ; and their company alone must have incited him to the murder of his old father, so as to enjoy the privileges of spending or squandering of his incomes. This evening only, my sister informed me about them, warning me not to remain there, when they come to stay at my house.

Corn. I, too, won't remain there, for which, Regan, I assure you. Edmund, I hear that you have behaved to your father, as a dutiful son should do.

Edm. It was obligatory on my part, Sir.

Glou. He did discover his crooked designs and was injured in his arm, while attempting to arrest him.

Corn. Is he being chased ?

Glou. Yes, my good Lord, he is.

Corn. If he be taken, he shall never more
Be fear'd of doing harm ; make your own purpose,
How in my strength you please. For you, Edmund
Whose virtue and obedience doth this instant
So much commend itself, you shall be ours :
Natures of such deep trust we shall much need ;
You we first seize on.

Edm. I shall serve you, Sir.
Truly, however else.

Glou. For him I thank your Grace.

Corn. You know not why we came to visit you—

Reg. Thus out of season threading dark-ey'd night ;
Occasions, noble Gloucester, of some poise,
Wherein we must have use of your advice.
Our father he hath writ, so hath our sister,
Of differences, which I best thought it fit
To answer from our home ; the several messengers
From hence attend dispatch. Our good old friend,
Lay comforts to your bosom, and bestow
Your needful counsel to our businesses,
Which craves the instant use.

Glou. I serve you, Madam.
Your Graces are right welcome.

[*Flourish. Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—[*Before* GLOUCESTER'S *Castle.*]

Enter KENT *and* OSWALD, severally.

Osw. Good dawning to thee, friend : Art of this house ?

Kent. Ay.

Osw. Where may we set our horses ?

Kent. I' th' mire.

Corn. Once he is caught, I will personally see to it, nobody need be afraid on account of any harm from him, as he would instantly be put to death. Carry out your plans for his capture and for that purpose, use my authority and resources, as you like. As regards you, Edmund, with your virtuous obedience at this moment, you have done something, which in itself is praiseworthy, you shall gain our favour. You being so profoundly trustworthy, by nature, shall be much more needed by us. We seize you as our staunch supporter and ally.

Edm. I am fully willing to serve you, Sir. Whatever be my deficiencies, my services are yours to command.

Glou. For your generous treatment to him, I am much obliged to your lordship.

Corn. You don't know, what for have we called on you—

Reg. Thus out of season, cumbrously traversing the darkness, we come to you with quite an important objective in regard to which we must ask and make use of your advice. Our father, so also our sister, has written to us about their disputes which I deemed it most fitting to answer away from home, the several messengers waiting to be sent on their errand. Our good old friend, let you be comforted and in regard to the task, bestow your needful valuable advice on us, which urgently demands to make a prompt use of that.

Glou. My services are yours to command, Madam. I accord a warm welcome to your honours.

[*Flourish*. *Exeunt*.

SCENE II.—[*Before* GLOUCESTER'S *Castle*.]

Enter KENT *and* OSWALD, severally.

Osw. May dawning be good to you, friend. Are you a servant here in this house ?

Kent. Yes, I am.

Osw. Where should we keep our horses ?

Kent. Set them in the deep mud.

Osw. Prithee, if thou lov'st me, tell me.

Kent. I love thee not.

Osw. Why, then I care not for thee.

Kent. If I had thee in Lipsbury pinfold, I would make thee care for me.

Osw. Why dost thou use me thus? I know thee not.

Kent. Fellow, I know thee.

Osw. What dost thou know me for ?

Kent. A knave, a rascal, an eater of broken meats ; a base, proud, shallow beggarly, three-suited, hundred-pound, filthy, worsted-stocking knave ; a lily-livered, action-taking whoreson, glass-gazing, super-serviceable, finical rogue, one-trunk-inheriting slave : one that wouldst be a bawd in way of good service, and art nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pander, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch : one whom I will beat into clamorous whining if thou deny'st the least syllable of thy addition.

Osw. Why, what a monstrous fellow art thou, thus to rail on one that is neither known of thee nor knows thee !

Kent. What a brazen-fac'd varlet art thou, to deny thou knowest me ! It is two days since I tripp'd up thy heels and beat thee before the King ? Draw, you rogue ; for though it be night, yet the moon shines : I'll make a sop o' th' moonshine of you. [*Drawing his sword.* You whoreson cullionly barber-monger, draw.

Osw. Away ! I have nothing to do with thee.

Kent. Draw, you rascal ; you came with letters against the King, and take Vanity the puppet's part against the royalty of her father. Draw, you rogue, or I'll so carbonado your shanks : draw, you rascal ; come your ways.

Osw. Help, ho ! murther ! help !

Osw. Please, would you be good enough to tell me ?

Kent. I have no love to be spared for you.

Osw. If that is so, I also care a fig for you.

Kent. If I had brought you in Liptown enclosure, you would have cared for me.

Osw. For what reason do you treat me thus ? I have no acquaintance, as such, with you.

Kent. But, you fellow, I know you pretty well.

Osw. What do you know me to be ?

Kent. A scoundrel, a rogue, an eater of the remains of food, a mean, arrogant, hollow, lubberly wretched, a fellow with three suits of clothes a year, a hundred pound, wearing dirty worsted-stocking, white-livered, excessively litigant, scurvy bastard, foppish, over-officious, fastidious, knave ; beggarly, slavish ; one who would be a pimp, though apparently doing good service, you are thus nothing but an amalgamation of a rogue, beggar, dastard, pander ; and the son and successor of a bitch of low breed, inheriting all its characteristics, one whom I would give a thrashing, resulting into vociferous shrieks by you, in case you refuse any of the titles I have hitherto conferred on you.

Osw. Why, what a stupid fellow you are, thus to shower abuses on me, who is neither known to you, nor does he know yourself !

Kent. What an impudent-faced rascal are you, to deny that you know me ! Is it not only two days back when I tripped up your heels and beat you before the King ? Withdraw yourself, you scurvy scoundrel, for though it be night, yet the moon shines brightly. I will knock you into a puddle wherefrom you would look up at the moon. [*Drawing his sword.* You lubberly wretch, despicably mean, frequenting to barber, withdraw yourself.

Osw. Be away hence ! I have no traffic with you.

Kent. Go back, you rogue ; you have come with letters against the King, and side with that frivolous piece of worthlessness against the royal dignity of her father. Withdraw yourself, rascal, otherwise I will slash your lower legs, withdraw, you wretch : come along.

Osw. Help, ho ! murder ! help !

Kent. Strike, you slave ; stand, rogue, stand ; you neat slave, strike. [*Beats him.*

Osw. Help, ho ! murther ! murther !

Enter EDMUND, *with his rapier drawn.*

Edm. How now ! What's the matter ?

Kent. With you, goodman boy, an you please : come, I'll flesh ye ; come on, young master.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants.

Glou. Weapons ! arms ! What's the matter here ?

Corn. Keep peace, upon your lives :
He dies that strikes again. What is the matter ?

Reg. The messengers from our sister and the King.

Corn. What is your difference ? Speak.

Osw. I am scarce in breath, my Lord.

Kent. No marvel, you have so bestirr'd your valour. You cowardly rascal, nature disclaims in thee : a tailor made thee.

Corn. Thou art strange fellow ; a tailor make a man ?

Kent. A tailor, sir : a stone-cutter or a painter could not have made him so ill, though they had been but two years o' th' trade.

Corn. Speak yet, how grew your quarrel ?

Osw. This ancient ruffian, Sir, whose life I have spar'd at suit of his grey beard,—

Kent. Thou whoreson zed ! thou unnecessary letter ! My Lord, if you will give me leave, I will tread this unbolted villain into mortar, and daub the wall of a jakes with him.—Spare my grey beard, you wagtail !

Kent. Let me strike, you screaming slave ; stay, you foppish trim spruce scoundrel, let me shriek. [*Beats him.*

Osw. Help, ho ! murder ! murder !

Enter EDMUND, *with his rapier drawn.*

Edm. Now, what is the matter ?

Kent. The matter is with you, you good fellow, if it pleases you, come, I will give you a taste of fighting ; come on, young master.

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GLOUCESTER, *and* Servants.

Glou. Weapons and arms ! What's the matter with you here ?

Corn. Keep peace at the peril of your lives. One who strikes now, shall instantly be put to death. What is the reason for this quarrel ?

Reg. They are messengers, one from our sister and the other from the King.

Corn. What makes you quarrel that way ? Speak.

Osw. Look, how he has almost choked me, my Lord.

Kent. It is no surprise that you have fought so heroically, with much of your pugnacity. You dastardly rogue, nature disowns all the parts in your making ; you, no better than a clay figure, dressed up in clothes.

Corn. You are a strange fellow indeed ; how, after all, could a tailor make a man ?

Kent. A tailor could, sir : a sculptor or a painter could not have made a poor creature such as he, even though they might have two years' experience in their profession to their credit.

Corn. Speak still, how did your quarrel come to this stage ?

Osw. This old-fashioned, licentious knave, whose life I have spared out of pity for his age.

Kent. You bastard outcast, obsolete like the unnecessary letter 'Z'. My Lord, if you permit me, I will crush this unmitigated villain into mortar, and plaster the wall of a privy with him. Do you any more talk of sparing me, for my age, you contemptible fawning creature ?

Corn. Peace, sirrah!
You beastly knave, know you no reverence?

Kent. Yes, Sir; but anger hath a privilege.

Corn. What art thou angry?

Kent. That such a slave as this should wear a sword,
Who wears no honesty. Such smiling rogues as these,
Like rats, oft bite the holy cords a-twain
Which are too intrince t' unloose; smooth every passion
That in the natures of their lords rebel;
Being oil to fire, snow to their colder moods;
Renege, affirm, and turn their halcyon beaks
With every gale and vary of their masters,
Knowing nought, like dogs, but following—
A plague upon your epileptic visage!
Smile you my speeches, as I were a fool?
Goose, if I had you upon Sarum plain,
I'd drive ye cackling home to Camelot.

Corn. What! art thou mad, old fellow?

Glou. How fell you out? say that.

Kent. No contraries hold more antipathy
Than I and such a knave.

Corn. Why dost thou call him knave? What is his fault?

Kent. His countenance likes me not.

Corn. No more, perchance, does mine, nor his, nor hers.

Kent. Sir, 'Tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time
Than stands on any shoulder that I see
Before me at this instant.

Corn. This is some fellow,
Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect
A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
Quite from his nature: he can not flatter, he,
An honest mind and plain, he must speak truth:
An they will take it so; if not, he's plain.
These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness

Corn. Keep peace, you boisterous fellow ; don't you have any sense of reverence ?

Kent. Yes, Sir ; I do have that, but while in my wrath, I may be excused for using strong words, oblivious of courtesy.

Corn. What makes you angry ?

Kent. I am wrathful as this extremely dishonest fellow should wear a sword. Smiling rascals, such as he oft bite the sacred bonds of affection into two which are too tightly drawn to make loose : flatter every passion, that breaks forth in their masters. They are very much like adding oil to fire (*i.e.*, their fiery mood) and snow to their colder temperaments ; deny, confirm and turn their king-fisher's beaks according to every varying wind of their masters, knowing nothing, like dogs, except the habit of following. A plague upon your grinning face, contorted like that of a person in an epileptic fit. Do you ridicule my words with grims, as if I were a simpleton? If I had found you upon Salisbury Common, I would have driven you chattering, right up to Camelot.

Corn. What ! have you run amuck, old fellow ?

Glou. What made you fall into quarrel ? tell us that.

Kent. No opponents would have more repulsion than what I and that knave have for each other.

Corn. For what reason do you call him a knave ? What fault do you attribute to him ?

Kent. His very face does not please me at all.

Corn. Perhaps it does not please you no more ; so also mine, or his or hers.

Kent. Sir, it is my profession to be straightforward : I have seen nobler faces in my time than any among the persons, whom I see standing before me at this moment.

Corn. This is a knave, who having been applauded for bluntness, does show an impudent boisterousness, and forces himself to behave in a manner very much different from what he really is, assuming a roughly outspoken demeanour. He cannot wheedle ; he being candid with an honest mind, it is incumbent on him to speak the truth ; and if people accept this fact without being resentful, well and good, otherwise he will pretend to be outspoken. I very well know the knaves, such as these, who in the name of plainness, surreptitiously conceal

Harbour more craft and more corrupter ends
Than twenty silly-ducking observants,
That stretch their duties nicely.

Kent. Sir, in good faith, in sincere verity.
Under th' allowance of your great aspect,
Whose influence, like the wreath of radiant fire
On flick'ring Phoebus' front.—

Corn. What mean'st by this ?

Kent. To go out of my dialect, which you discommend so much. I know, Sir, I am no flatterer ; he that beguil'd you in a plain accent, was a plain knave ; which for my part I will not be, though I should win your displeasure to entreat me to't.

Corn. What was th' offence you gave him ?

Osw. I never gave him any :
It pleas'd the King his master very late
To strike at me, upon his misconstruction ;
When, he compact, and flattering his displeasure,
Tripp'd me behind ; being down, insulted, rail'd,
And put upon him such a deal of man,
That worthied him, got praises of the King
For him attempting who was self-subdu'd ;
And, in the fleshment of this dread exploit,
Drew on me here again.

Kent. None of these rogues and cowards
But Ajex is their fool.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks !
You stubborn ancient knave, you reverend braggart,
We'll teach you.

Kent. Sir, I am too old to learn.
Call not your stocks for me ; I serve the King,
On whose employment I was sent to you ;
You shall do small respect, show too bold malice
Against the grace and person of my master,
Stocking his messenger.

more cunning and more polluted ends than a score of servile and fawning, ludicrously obsequious attendants, punctiliously discharging their courtly duties to the utmost exactness.

Kent. Sir, in good faith, in earnest truth, the approval of your lofty favour, whose influence, like the wreath of curls round the head of the sun-god in old coins, represents the lambent rays.—

Corn. What do you mean thereby ?

Kent. My meaning and purpose is to give up that plain manner of speech which you find faulty. I know it well, sir, I am no 'wheedler' ; and he that tried to deceive you with the pretence of outspoken speech, was an evident knave, which as for my case is concerned, I will not be, though you entreat me to be a plain knave, I will not be one, even when I should win your displeasure in refusing to be a sycophant.

Corn. In what manner did you offend him ?

Osw. I never offended him in any way : the King, his master lately found it pleasing to eventually aim his blow at me ; in consequence of King's misunderstanding and misrepresenting my case, whereupon, in league with the King, and humouring his resentment tripped up my heels and while I was down, exulted over me and assumed such a heroic demeanour, that might win honour for him. He, feeling stilted and pompous, was praised by the King for assailing him, who lying on the ground was, by that very fact, incapable of defending himself, and in his fleshing, stimulated by the result of his first triumph has been ready to attack me here once again.

Kent. There is not one of these rogues and cowards to whom, when it comes to bragging, Ajex would not appear a simpleton.

Corn. Go and bring the stocks ! You rough and violent, old-fashioned knave, you aged braggart, we will teach you properly.

Kent. Sir, I am so old that I am unable to learn any such new lesson. Don't send for the stocks to put me into them, as I attend on the King, on whose mission I have been sent to you. You would be little courteous and express too strong an ill-will against the dignity and person of my master, by putting his messenger into stocks.

Corn. Fetch forth the stocks!
As I have life and honour, there shall he sit till noon.

Reg. Till noon! till night, my Lord; and all night too.

Kent. Why, Madam, if I were your father's dog,
You should not use me so.

Reg. Sir, being his knave, I will.

Corn. This is a fellow of self-same colour
Our sister speaks of. Come, bring away the stocks.

[*Stocks brought out.*

Glou. Let me beseech your Grace not to do so.
His fault is much, and the good King, his master
Will check him for't: your purpose'd low correction
Is such as basest and contemned'st wretches
For pilf'rings and most common trespasses
Are punish'd with: the King must take it ill,
That he, so slightly valued in his messenger,
Should have him thus restrained.

Corn. I'll answer that.

Reg. My sister may receive it much more worse
To have her gentleman abus'd, assaulted
For following his affairs. Put in his legs.

[KENT *is put in the stocks.*

Corn. Come, my Lord, away.

[*Exeunt all but* GLOUCESTER *and* KENT.

Glou. I am sorry for thee, friend; 'ts the Duke's pleasure,
Whose disposition, all the world well knows,
Will not be rubb'd nor stopped: I'll entreat for thee.

Kent. Pray, do not, Sir, I have watch'd and travell'd hard;
Some time I shall sleep out, the rest I'll whistle.
A good man's fortune may grow out at heels:
Give you good morrow!

Glou. The Duke's to blame in this: 't will be ill-taken.

[*Exit.*

Corn. Be quick, go and bring the stocks ! By my life and honour, he shall have to suffer the ordeal till noon.

Reg. What ! till noon, nay, better say till night my Lord, and throughout the night also.

Kent. Why, Madam, if I had been your father's dog, you would not have ill-treated me thus.

Reg. Sir, as you are my father's knave, I will see you put into stocks.

Corn. This fellow too is built of the same metal, as that of his fellows, referred to by our sister. Hasten to bring the stocks here. [*Stocks* brought out.

Glou. Let me entreat your honour not to put him into stocks. His fault is great, but for that let his good King, his master, check him. Your purposive humiliating punishment is such as the most servile and condemned fellows for their petty thefts and most common trespasses are punished with. The King would not help being resentful that he has been insulted in the person of his messenger, who should be thus confined.

Corn. I will be accountable for that.

Reg. My sister would receive it in much more worse a way discovering that her gentleman has been abused and attacked for showing zeal on her behalf. Put his legs into stocks.

[KENT *is put in the stocks.*

Corn. Come, my Lord, let's move.

[*Exeunt all but* GLOUCESTER *and* KENT.

Glou. I regret for your having been so ill-treated, friend; it is the will of the Duke whose impetuosity the world knows but too well and who will neither be thwarted nor stopped from doing what his fancy would lead him to. I shall still beseech on your behalf.

Kent. Please do not do that, Sir. I have kept awake and travelled much ; some of my time I shall pass in sleeping and the rest I shall while away in whistling. A good man's fortune may be in a wretched plight, as stockings worn out at the heels. May God give you good morning !

Glou. The Duke himself is to be blamed in this regard. The King is sure to take it ill.

[*Exit.*

Kent. Good King, that must approve the common saw,
Thou out of heaven's benediction com'st
To the warm sun!
Approach, thou beacon to this underglobe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter. Nothing almost sees miracles
But misery: I know 'tis from Cordelia,
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course. [*Reads.*] '—and shall find time
From this enormous state—seeking to give
Losses their remedies. All weary and o'er-watch'd,
Take vantage, heavy eyes, not to behold
This shameful lodging.
Fortune, good night; smile once more; turn thy wheel.
[*He sleeps.*

SCENE III.—[*A Wood.*]

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. I heard myself proclaim'd;
And by the happy hollow of a tree
Escap'd the hunt. No port is free; no place,
That guard and most unusual vigilance,
Does not attend my taking. Whiles I may 'scape,
I will preserve myself; and am bethought
To take the basest and most poorest shape
That ever penury, in contempt of man,
Brought near to beast; my face I'll grime with filth,
Blanket my loins, elf all my hairs in knots,
And with presented nakedness outface
The winds and persecutions of the sky.
The country gives me proof and precedent
Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
Strike in their numb'd and mortified bare arms
Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary;
And with this horrible object, from low farms,
Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,
Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,

Kent. Good King must prove the truth of the proverb : You pass from a better state to a worse one, in leaving the beneficent shade of a spreading tree and then toil in the extreme heat of the midday sun. Come, you heavenly benediction, to me in this sublunary world, so that with the help of your comforting rays I may go through this letter. Scarcely anything but misery sees miracles as this letter from Cordelia provides me with a miraculous relief at a time, when all my designs are frustrated. Perchance, she has been informed about my living in disguise. [Reads.]—'I shall gain time by this strange situation, to be employed by me to prevent our present losses by seeking remedial measures for them.'—I am wholly exhausted and worn out by keeping awake. O my heavy eyes, take advantage of your heaviness to close in sleep, so as not to see this disgraceful situation. Fortune, good-night, though you are adverse to me, now, but once again cast your favourable glance upon me by so turning your wheel that the scourges of men may come down to the bottom.

[*He sleeps.*

SCENE III.—[*A wood*]

Enter EDGAR

Edg. I heard myself denounced as a criminal and by fortunately being able to hide myself in the hollow of a tree, I escaped from the searching glance of my chasers. A watch is set for me at every seaport and there is no place, where those in watch are not extraordinarily vigilant to capture me. While there is a chance of escaping, I will protect myself that way, and I have hit upon a plan to assume the most miserably wretched and poorest appearance, that ever the extreme poverty, in showing its utter contempt for man, debases him so as to be assimilated to the condition of a beast. I will begrime my face with dirt and cover my loins with nothing but a blanket ; mat and tangle my hair such as fairies and woodland sprites are supposed to do, and with counterfeit nakedness brave the winds and the sufferings from the high heaven. The country provides me with an evidence and precedence of Bedlam beggars, who with tumultuous voices strike into their stupefied and deadened bare arms, pins, wooden pricks, nails, twigs of rosemary and presenting this horrible appearance frequently from lowly farms, poor paltry villages, sheep-folds and mills, sometimes giving vent to their curses, sometimes

Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygod! poor Tom!
That's something yet: Edgar I nothing am. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—[*Before* GLOUCESTER'S *castle.* KENT *in the stocks.*]

Enter LEAR, Fool, *and* Gentleman.

Lear. 'Tis strange that they should so depart from home,
And not send back my messenger.

Gent. As I learn'd,
The night before there was no purpose in them
Of this remove.

Kent. Hail to thee, noble master!

Lear. Ha!
Mak'st thou this shame thy pastime?

Kent. No, my Lord.

Fool. Ha, ha! he wears cruel garters. Horses are tied by the heads, dogs and bears by th' neck, monkeys by th' loins and men by th' legs: when a man's over-lusty at legs, then he wears wooden nether-stocks.

Lear. What's he that hath so much thy place mistook
To set thee here?

Kent. It is both he and she,
Your son and daughter.

Lear. No.

Kent. Yes.

Lear. No, I say.

Kent. I say, yea.

Lear. No no, they would not.

Kent. Yes, they have.

Lear. By Jupiter, I swear, no.

Kent. By Juno, I swear, ay.

engaged in their prayers, compel the people to give them alms. Poor Turlygod ! poor Tom ! There is some hope yet left for me as poor Tom and hence I am no longer Edgar. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—[*Before* GLOUCESTER'S *castle*, KENT *in the stocks.*]

Enter LEAR, Fool, *and* Gentleman.

Lear. It is strange they should depart from home in such a sudden and eccentric manner and not send my messenger back to me.

Gent. As I could gather, the night before they had no intention in regard to their departure.

Kent. I welcome you, my noble and benevolent master,

Lear. Ha ! Do you regard such a disgrace an amusement ?

Kent. No, my Lord, I don't.

Fool. Ha, ha ! he wears cruel stockings. Horses are tied by their heads ; dogs and bears by their necks, monkeys by their loins and men by their legs : when a man is found saucy and licentious in the use of his legs (such as kicking), they are put in wooden stockings.

Lear. What kind of man is he, who has so mistaken your position as to put you here in these wooden stocks ?

Kent. It is he as well as she, your son and daughter, who have done all this.

Lear. No, it is not they.

Kent. Yes, they are.

Lear. No, this is what I say.

Kent. I say, yes.

Lear. No, no ; they would not do so.

Kent. Yes, they have done so.

Lear. I do swear by Jupiter, no.

Kent. I swear by Juno, yes.

Lear. They durst not do't,
They could not, would not do't: 'tis worse than murther,
To do upon respect such violent outrage.
Resolve me, with all modest haste, which way
Thou might'st deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.

Kent. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your Highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that show'd
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stew'd in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations:
Deliver'd letters, spite of intermission,
Which presently they read: on whose contents
They summon'd up their meiny, straight took horse;
Commanded me to follow, and attend
The leisure of their answer, gave me cold looks;
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome I perceiv'd had poison'd mine,—
Being the very fellow which of late
Display'd so saucily against your Highness,
Having more man than wit about me, drew.
He rais'd the house with loud and cowardly cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.

Fool. Winter's not gone yet, if the wild-geese fly that way.

Fathers that wear rags
Do make their children blind,
But fathers that bear bags
Shall see their children kind.
Fortune, that arrant whore,
Ne'er turns the key to th' poor.
But for all this thou shalt have as many dolours
For thy daughters as thou canst tell in a year.

Lear. O! How this mother swells up toward my heart;
Hysterica Passio! down, thou climbing sorrow!
Thy element's below. Where is this daughter?

Kent. With the Earl, Sir; here within.

Lear. They dared not to do it. They could not have done it, they would not do so ; it is even much worse than murder to be so violently outrageous upon the respect which is due to the King. Satisfy my queries, in a reasonable brevity, how was it possible for you to deserve or for them to inflict this relentless treatment, even after having discovered that you were a messenger from me.

Kent. My Lord, when I delivered your Highness' letters to them at their home, I could hardly rise from the submissive posture of kneeling, at that moment, a messenger came hot and perspiring because of his scorching ride. Excited and worried, he was half breathless and gasping, he brought greetings from his mistress, Goneril, whose letters he delivered, though my business was thus interrupted and the answer, I was to receive, delayed. They immediately read over the letter and on ascertaining the purport thereof, they at once manned and rode away, commanding me to follow them and wait until they were at their leisure to give me their answer. They did treat me with an extreme apathy and I meeting here the other messenger, whose welcome as I saw, destroyed all my chance of being well received. He is the same fellow, who behaved recently with such an ostentatious impudence against your Highness, and finding in me more valour than discretion, withdrew himself and alarmed and awoke the entire household with his cowardly shrieks of murder. Your son and daughter found this offence of mine so great as to shamefully ill-treat me by putting me in wooden stocks.

Fool. The flight of wild-geese shows that winter still lingers on. Fathers that wear torn clothes, do find their children not over-anxious to take any notice of them, but fathers who keep their money bags full, find their children keenly attending on them. Fortune, that notorious strumpet, never opens the door for the poor, but for all this you shall have as many griefs on account of your daughters as you are able to recount in a year.

Lear. O ! How this mother rises up towards my heart ; Hysterica Passio ! go down, you ascending grief, the proper place, you like to afflict, is below. Where is this daughter now ?

Kent. She is with the Earl, my Lord, here inside the castle.

Lear. Follow me not; stay here.

[*Exit*.

Gent. Made you no more offence but what you speak of?

Kent. None.
How chance the King comes with so small a number?

Fool. And thou hadst been set i' th' stocks for that question, thou'dst well deserv'd it.

Kent. Why, Fool?

Fool. We'll set thee to school to an ant, to teach thee there's no labouring i' th' winter. All that follow their noses are led by their eyes but blind men: and there's not a nose among twenty but can smell him that's stinking. Let go thy hold when a great wheel runs down a hill, lest it break thy neck with following; but the great one that goes upwards, let him draw thee after. When a wise man gives thee better counsel, give me mine again: I would have nose but knaves follow it, since a Fool gives it.

That Sir which serves and seeks for gain,
And follows but for form,
Will pack when it begins to rain,
And leave thee in the storm.
But I will tarry; the Fool will stay;
And let the wise man fly:
The knave turns Fool that runs away;
The Fool no knave, perdy.

Kent. Where learn'd you this, Fool?

Fool. Not i' th' stocks, fool.

Re-enter LEAR, *with* GLOUCESTER.

Lear. Deny to speak with me! They are sick! They are weary!
They have travell'd all the night! mere fetches, ay,
The images of revolt and flying off.
Fetch me a better answer.

Lear. Do not follow me and wait here. *Exit.*

Gent. Did you commit no greater offence than what you refer to?

Kent. I did commit none. How does it happen that the King comes with so small a train ?

Fool. And you have been put in stocks, only for such an insignificant query. You richly deserved that.

Kent. Why do you say so, Fool ?

Fool. We will better ask you to learn from the ant, that you will gain nothing by following him in winter of adversity. All men (except the blind), though they follow their noses, are led by their eyes, and for the noses of blind men, there is not one but can smell him, who being muddied in fortune's mood, smells somewhat strongly of her displeasure. Hence your needless surprise at Lear's coming with so small a train. When a great wheel runs downward a hill, loose your hold and cease to follow it, lest it should break your neck ; but the great wheel which goes upward,—that you may comfortably and safely follow. When and if at all a wise man gives you a much better advice, give me my own advice back to me. I would have none but fools to follow my advice, since it is given by a Fool.

That man of lofty status, who serves and seeks for advantages, and follows only to keep up appearance, will bid good-bye, when it rains, so as to leave you in the storm of adversity. But I will, unlike him, stay ; the Fool will stay, even though the so-called wise man escapes. The knave who runs away, follows the advice given by a fool, but I, the Fool, truly speaking, shall not follow my own advice, by taxing knave.

Kent. Wherefrom did you learn all this, Fool ?

Fool. I did learn that, not by being placed in the stocks, Fool.

Re-enter LEAR, *with* GLOUCESTER.

Lear. Refuse to speak with me! they are unwell ! They are exhausted ! They have travelled all the night ! These are nothing else but only crafty excuses, the tokens of revolt and rebellion. Fetch me a much better answer than these mere fetches.

Glou. My dear Lord,
You know the fiery quality of the Duke;
How unremovable and fix'd he is
In his own course!

Lear. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
Fiery! What quality? Why, Gloucester,
I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Glou. Well, my good Lord, I have inform'd them so.

Lear. Inform'd them! Dost thou understand me, man?

Glou. Ay, my good Lord.

Lear. The King would speak with Cornwall; the dear father.
Would with his daughter speak, commands, tends service:
Are they inform'd of this? My breath and blood!
Fiery! the fiery Duke! Tell the hot Duke that—
No, but not yet; maybe, he is not well:
Infirmity doth still neglect all office
Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves
When Nature, being oppress'd, commands the mind
To suffer with the body. I'll forbear;
And am fall'n out with my more headier will,
To take the indispos'd and sickly fit
For the sound man. Death on my state! wherefore
[*Looking on* KENT.
Should he sit here? This act persuades me
That this remotion of the Duke and her
Is practice only. Give me my servant forth.
Go tell the Duke and's wife I'd speak with them,
Now, presently: bid them come forth and hear me,
Or at their chamber-door I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death.

Glou. I would have all well betwixt you. [*Exit.*

Lear. O me! my heart, my rising heart! but down!

Glou. My dear Lord, you know it too well about the passionate disposition of the Duke, how unalterable and stubbornly firm he is in his own line of action.

Lear. Vengeance ! plague ! death ! confusion ! fiery ! What quality of the Duke ? Why Gloucester, Gloucester, I would presently speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.

Glou. Well my good Lord, I have informed them of that.

Lear. What ! informed them ! Is that all? Do you but understand, who I am, man?

Glou. Yes, my good Lord, I do.

Lear. The King would like to speak to the Duke of Cornwall, the dear father would speak to his daughter. I command his services and tender my own. Have they been informed about this? Upon my life, the passionate and impetuous Duke !—tell the hot-tempered Duke that....no, but not yet. It is likely, he feels unwell : slackness in the performance of duties in a man, while he is ill, is a reasonable excuse, but while in sound health, he has to recognize his obligations, incumbent upon him. We are not our real selves, when being suppressed under the pressure of grief, our nature impels the mind to act in sympathy with the body. I will keep myself in check, as I am wrathful, affected by my more impetuous impulse, which led me to regard what is nothing more than the caprice of a sick man, as the deliberate intention of a man in sound health. For what reason [*Looking on* KENT] should he undergo this ordeal, sitting here ? This act incites me to believe that their departure from their home was a sheer ruse to deceive me. Release my servant out of the stocks. Go and tell the Duke and his wife, I desire to speak to them, now and at once. Command them to present themselves instantly and listen to what I say, or else I will beat the drum at their chamber-door, until its noise has been the death of the sleep.

Glou. I should be happy to see you on good terms with each other. [*Exit.*

Lear. O woe to me ! my heart, my swelling heart ! but go down !

Fool. Cry to it, Nuncle, as the cockney did to the eels whom she put 'em i' th' paste alive; she knapp'd 'em o' th' coxcombs with a stick, and cried, "Down, wantons, down!" 'Twas her brother that in pure kindness to the horse, buttered his hay.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER *with* CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Servants.

Lear. Good morrow to you both.
Corn. Hail your Grace!
[KENT *is set at liberty.*
Reg. I am glad to see your Highness.
Lear. Regan, I think you are; I know what reason
I have to think so: if thou shouldst not be glad,
I would divorce me from thy mother's tomb,
Sepulchring an adulteress. [*To* KENT] O! are you free?
Some other time for that. Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught: O Regan! she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here.
[*Points to his heart.*
I can scarce speak to thee; thou 'lt not believe
With how deprav'd a quality—O Regan!
Reg. I pray you, Sir, take patïence. I have hope
You less know how to value her desert
Than she to scant her duty.
Lear. Say? How is that?
Reg. I cannot think my sister in the least
Would fail her obligation. If, Sir, perchance
She have restrain'd the riots of your followers,
'Tis on such ground, and to such wholesome end,
As clears her from all blame.
Lear. My course on her!

Fool. Cry to it, Uncle, as the cockney woman did to the eels (not knowing that they should be killed before being cooked) ; when she put them in the dough, she struck them smartly on the combs of the cock, with a stick and cried 'down, impudent creatures, go down !' It was her brother, who, as if in earnest kindness to his horse, greased his hay which it would not eat, and thus keeping it from feeding, he would steal away the provender.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER, *with* CORNWALL, REGAN, *and* Servants.

Lear. May morning be good to both of you !

Corn. Welcome to you, my Gracious Lord !

[KENT *is set at liberty.*

Reg. I am glad to find your Highness here.

Lear. Regan, I think you are really glad. I have sufficient reason to think so, you being my daughter. If you were not glad, I should separate myself from my wife even in death, on the ground that she could not be loyal to me in life, and so be in her sepulchre. [*To* KENT] O, have they released you ? I will come to that matter, later on. Beloved Regan, your sister is extremely wicked : O, Regan ! She has tied sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture here to feast on my entrails.

[*Points to his heart.*

I can hardly speak to you ; you might not believe how utterly vitiated disposition she had, O Regan !–

Reg. Please, my Lord, be patient. I hope it will prove that you are more incapable of appreciating her merits than she is capable of falling short in her duty.

Lear. What do you say ? How do you explain that ?

Reg. I cannot contemplate my sister, neglecting in the least, any of her bounden duties. If, Sir, by chance, she may have forbidden your riotous train, it is on such ground and with such good purpose, as exempts her from censure.

Lear. May she be accursed !

Reg. O, Sir! You are old;
Nature in you stands on the very verge
Of her confine: you should be rul'd and led;
By some discretion that discerns your state
Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you
That to our sister you do make return;
Say you have wrong'd her.

Lear. Ask her forgiveness?
Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
"Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
Age is unnecessary: On my knees I beg [*Kneeling*]
That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food."

Reg. Good Sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks.
Return you to my sister.

Lear. [*Rising.*] Never, Regan.
She hath abated me of half my train;
Look'd black upon me; struck me with her tongue,
Most serpent-like, upon the very heart.
All the stor'd vengeance of Heaven fall
On her ingrateful top! strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness!

Corn. Fie, Sir, fie!

Lear. You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes! Infect her beauty,
You fen-suck'd fogs, drawn by the pow'rful sun,
To fall and blister her pride!

Reg. O, the blest gods! So will you wish on me,
When the rash mood is on.

Lear. No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse:
Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to harshness: her eyes are fierce, but thine
Do comfort and not burn. 'Tis not in thee
To grudge my pleasure, to cut off my train,
To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
And, in conclusion, to oppose the bolt
Against my coming in: thou better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,

Reg. O, Sir, you are old ; you have reached the extreme limit of saturation in your life ; you should now be controlled and led by some discreet person, that might perceive your enfeebled state of mind as well as of body much better than what you yourself might. Consequently, I implore you to go back to my sister, and tell her that you beg to be pardoned for the wrong you did to her.

Lear. What ! Shall I have to ask for her pardon ? Do you but understand how this becomes the dignity of the royal house or our relations as father and daughter? "Dear daughter, I do admit that old men like myself are altogether useless :- I bend on my knee to beg [*Kneeling*] that you will condescend to grant me clothing, bed and food."

Reg. Good Sir, no more of that. This kneeling as well as the use of ironical words is unbecoming of you and hence will be least effective on me. So go back to my sister.

Lear. [*Rising.*] I shall never go there again, Regan. She has diminished half of my train ; looked malignantly upon me ; smote me with her most serpent-like tongue upon my heart. May all the hoard vengeances of heaven fall on her ungrateful head ! Strike her young bones, you infectious airs, with lameness.

Corn. Shame, Sir, shame that you utter such words !

Lear. You, quick lightnings, cast your blinding flames into her abominable eyes ! May noxious vapours sucked up from the swamps by the heat of the sun contaminate her beauty and so fall upon her as to destroy her pride in her beauty.

Reg. O, my gods, bless me ! So will you shower your imprecations on me when you are in an impetuous fit of wrath.

Lear. No, Regan, you shall never have my curse : your nature, swayed by tender emotion, shall not abandon you to such an acrimonious behaviour, as your sister has shown: her eyes are violent, while yours are pleasant and comforting. It is not in your nature to be jealous of my pleasure ; to reduce my train ; to exchange heated words, hurriedly spoken ; to diminish my allowances and in conclusion to prevent my entering by closing the door : you know much better, the duties, which the natural affection bids you to render, the obligation of

Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude;
The half o' th' kingdom hast thou not forgot,
Wherein I thee endow'd.

Reg. Good, sir, to th' purpose.

Lear. Who put my man i' th' stocks ? [*Tucket within.*

Corn. What trumpet's that ?

Reg. I know't, my sister's : this approves her letter,
That she would soon be here.

Enter OSWALD.

Is your lady come ?

Lear. This is a slave, whose easy-borrow'd pride
Dwells in the fickle grace of her he follows.
Out, varlet, from my sight !

Corn. What means your Grace?

Lear. Who stock'd servant ? Regan, I have good hope.
Thou didst not know on't. Who comes here ?

Enter GONERIL.

O Heavens,
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if you yourselves are old,
Make it your cause ; send down and take my part !
[*To* GONERIL] Art not asham'd to look upon this beard ?
O Regan, will you take her by the hand ?

Gon. Why not by th' hand, Sir ? How have I offended?
All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

Lear. O sides ! you are too tough ;
Will you yet hold ? How came my man i' th' stocks ?

childhood ; manifestations of kindly feelings and returns of gratitude ; perhaps you still remember that I bestowed half of the entire kingdom upon you in your dowry.

Reg. That's good, sir, but come to the point, instead of wasting time in making these sentimental appeals.

Lear. Who put my messenger in the stocks ?

[*Tucket within.*

Corn. What does that trumpet signify ?

Reg. I know it well, it signifies my sister's arrival. This rather confirms what she said in her letter earlier and now she would soon be here.

Enter OSWALD.

Has your Lady come ?

Lear. This is a slave, whose pride, counterfeited with an appearance of naturalness, also dwells in the wayward temper of her whom he follows. Be off ! rascal, get you off from my sight !

Corn. What does your lordship mean ?

Lear. Who put my servant in the stocks ? Regan, I am sure you did not know of it. Who comes here presently ?

Enter GONERIL.

O Heavens, if you do have love for the old men, if you in your benignant government of the world are well pleased with obedience, if you are yourselves old, espouse my cause considering it to be your own ; send your messengers and let them undergo my experience ! [*To* GONERIL] Are you not ashamed of looking at so venerable an old man ? O Regan, do you but greet her so warmly, offering her your hand ?

Gon. What is amiss in her receiving me by the hand ? Sir, in what way have I offended anybody ? When an indiscreet man looks upon an act as an offence and an enfeebled old fellow calls it so, it would not be an offence in the real sense of the term.

Lear. O sides ! you are too strong to be cracked, will you even now sustain my frame ? In what way did my messenger come to be placed in the stocks ?

Corn. I set him there, Sir; but his own disorders
Deserv'd much less advancement.

Lear. You! did you?

Reg. I pray you, father, being weak, seem so.
If, till the expiration of your month,
You will return and sojourn with my sister,
Dismissing half your train, come then to me:
I am now from home, and out of that provision
Which shall be needful for your entertainment.

Lear. Return to her? and fifty men dismiss'd?
No, rather I abjure all roofs, and choose
To wage against the enmity o' th' air;
To be a comrade with the wolf and owl,
Necessity's sharp pinch! Return with her!
Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
To keep base life afoot. Return with her!
Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
To this detested groom. [*Pointing at* OSWALD.

Gon. At your choice, Sir.

Lear. I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad:
I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell!
We'll no more meet, no more see one another;
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or rather a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine: thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, or embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it;
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.
Mend when thou canst; be better at thy leisure;
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
I and my hundred knights.

Corn. It was I who put him there, Sir, but his own disorderly conduct deserved much less promotion.

Lear. You, yourself ! Did you put him there ?

Reg. I implore you, father, since you are really weak, be content to think yourself so, and as such yield to be treated as an old man affected by dotage should be. If until the expiry of your present month you will go back and stay with my sister, half of your train being reduced, then you may come to me. At this moment, I am away from home and without all those means, as are necessary for your entertainment.

Lear. Shall I return to her ? and half of my train diminished ? Nay, I would rather renounce all the shelters and better choose to wage war against the hostility of the air ; become a companion to the wolf and owl ; the sad and cruel strait, to which necessity drives us ! Return with her ? How terrible ! Why, the impetuous France who took our youngest daughter—even before his throne, I could as well be brought to kneel, as though I were his attendant squire, living on pension merely to let the life be dragged on somehow or other. Return with her ? How miserable ! You may better persuade me to be an attendant and pack-horse driver to this despicable groom. [*Pointing at* OSWALD.

Gon. You may do as you please, Sir.

Lear. I pray you, daughter, do not make me mad. I will trouble you no more, my child. May you fare well! We will not meet each other nor shall we see each other's faces, nevertheless, you are after all my flesh, my blood, my daughter ; or rather, I should say, disease set in my flesh which I of necessity must call mine. You are a boil, a plague sore, an inflamed and swollen ulcer in my contaminated blood. But I cease to reproach you ; let the sense of shame naturally come upon you. I do not invoke it. I do not entreat Jupiter with his thunderbolt to shoot at you, nor shall I tell your sordid tales to Jove, the supreme judge. Improve yourself, whenever you will, be better but in your spare time. I can afford to be patient and stay, with my train of hundred knights, with Regan.

Reg. Not altogether so;
I look'd not for you yet, nor am provided
For your fit welcome. Give ear, Sir, to my sister;
For those that mingle reason with your passion
Must be content to think you old, and so—
But she knows what she does.

Lear. Is this well spoken?

Reg. I dare avouch it, Sir: what! fifty followers
Is it not well! What should you need of more?
Yea, or so many, sith that both charge and danger
Speak 'gainst so great a number? How, in one house,
Should many people, under two commands,
Hold amity? 'Tis hard; almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my Lord, receive attendance
From those that she calls servants, or from mine?

Reg. Why not, my Lord? If then they chanc'd to slack ye
We could control them. If you will come to me,
For now I spy a danger, I entreat you
To bring but five-and-twenty; to no more
Will I give place or notice.

Lear. I gave you all—

Reg. And in good time you gave it.

Lear. Made you my guardians, my depositaries,
But kept a reservation to be follow'd
With such a number. What, must I come to you
With five-and-twenty? Regan, said you so?

Reg. And speak't again, my Lord, no more with me.

Lear. Those wicked creatures yet do look well-favour'd
When others are more wicked! not being the worst
Stands in some rank of praise. [*To* GONERIL]
I'll go with thee:
The fifty yet doth double five-and-twenty,
And thou art twice her love.

Reg. Not altogether that way, I did not expect you for some time to come, nor am I provided with all those means, so as to give you a proper welcome. Sir, listen to my sister, for those who dilute your passionate words with common-sense, examining them in the cold light of reason, must be content in taking all your headlong outbursts as mere idiosyncrasies of your old age. I need not add, as she knows but too well about what she does.

Lear. Do you mean what you speak?

Reg. I dare maintain it, Sir : What ! fifty followers ? Is that number insufficient anyway ? For what purpose, at all, do you need more than that. Yes, or even fifty, since expenses and risk both are strong arguments against so large a retinue. How in one and the same house so many people under dual authorities can possibly live in harmony and friendship. It is rather difficult ; almost impossible.

Gon. Why might not you, my Lord, allow yourself to be waited on by those that she calls attendants or, for that reason, by mine ?

Reg. Why not so, my Lord ? In that situation, if they happened to be apathetic or negligent, we could reprove them for that. If and when you will come to me, now I suspect a peril, I beseech you to bring only twenty-five followers and no more than that will I admit into my castle or give recognition to, as your knights.

Lear. I gave you all that I had.

Reg. And you did so at the right moment, before it was too late.

Lear. I made you my custodians, under me of my realms, trustees of my power, but at the same time, made a reservation that I should be attended by a certain number. What ! Shall I come to you, but with no more than a train of twenty-five ? Regan, did you say so ?

Reg. Yes, I did and repeat that once again, my Lord ; no more than that with me shall I like.

Lear. Those wicked creatures still look to be handsome, when there are others more wicked than them ; the former thus not being the worst, deserve some kind of praise or the other. [*To* GONERIL.] I propose to go with you : your fifty is just the double of twenty-five and hence your love is as much as twice of your sister's.

Gon. Hear me, my Lord.
What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you ?

Reg. What need one ?

Lear. O! reason not the need ; our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous :
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady ;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But, for true need,—
You Heavens, give me that patience, patience I need !—
You see me here, you gods,—a poor old man,
As full of grief as age ; wretched in both !
If it be you that stirs these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely : touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheek ! No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both
That all the world shall—I will do such things,
What they are, yet I know not, but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep ;
No, I'll not weep :
I have full cause of weeping. [*Storm heard at a distance.*]
but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
Or ere I'll weep. O Fool ! I shall go mad.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, GLOUCESTER, KENT, *and* FOOL.

Corn. Let us withdraw, 't will be a storm.

Reg. This house is little: the old man and's people
Can not be well bestow'd.

Gon. 'Tis his own blame ; hath put himself from rest,
And must needs taste his folly.

Gon. Listen to me, my Lord. Why do you need twenty-five, ten or five to attend on you in a house where twice as many are already there to execute your commands ?

Reg. Why do you need even one attendant ?

Lear. O ! do not argue as to what is absolutely necessary ; our most wretched beggars, even though extremely impoverished, have in their meanest possession, something more than what is absolutely necessary. Let the nature be allowed nothing more than what is inevitable for its maintenance, there would remain no distinction as such in between the life of man and that of beast. You are a lady ; if the clothes you wear were to make you look splendid and keep you warm,—why, nature has no need to wear such an attire as yours, which hardly keeps you warm. But my true need at the moment is patience ; Heavens, give me patience, which I so urgently need ! You look here at me, a poor old man full of ghastly sorrows and sufferings, in proportion to the age, wretched in both. If it were you, who stir the hearts of these daughters to be rebellious against their father, don't insist on me to endure it and not to resist it. Instil noble wrath into my sinews and let not the tears, the women's weapons, damp my manly courage. No, you unnatural witches ! I will execute such vengeance on both of you, that the entire world will be terrified and witness—I will do such things—what shape they are likely to take I am myself unaware in that regard as yet, but they will be horrors of the earth. You like to think, I will weep, no, I will not weep, although I have sufficient reason to weep. [*Storm heard at a distance.*] This heart shall crack into a hundred thousand fragments, before I will weep. O Fool ! I shall go mad.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, GLOUCESTER, KENT *and* Fool.

Corn. Let us withdraw ourselves ; it will be a furious storm.

Reg. The house is too small to conveniently accommodate the old man as well as his attendants.

Gon. It is his own fault, whereby he has deprived himself of ease and comfort and must now suffer the consequences of his folly.

Reg. For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

Gon. So am I purpos'd.
Where is my Lord of Gloucester ?

Re-enter GLOUCESTER.

Glou. The King is in high rage.

Corn. Whither is he going ?

Glou. He calls to horse ; but will I know not whither.

Corn. 'Tis best to give him way ; he leads himself.

Gon. My Lord, entreat him by no means to stay.

Glou. Alack ! the night comes on, and the bleak winds
Do sorely ruffle ; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush.

Reg. O ! Sir, to wilful men,
The injuries that they themselves procure,
Must be their school-masters. Shut up your doors ;
He is attended with a desperate train,
And what they may incense him to, being apt
To have his ear abus'd, wisdom bids fear.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my Lord ; 'tis a wild night :
My Regan counsels well : come out o' th' storm.

[*Exeunt.*

Reg. As far as he personally is concerned I will gladly receive him, but not even one attendant should accompany him.

Gon. So am I determined. Where is my Lord of Gloucester ?

Re-enter GLOUCESTER.

Glou. The King is violently furious.

Corn. Where is he proceeding ?

Glou. He summons his attendants to mount and ride with him ; but where is he proceeding, I myself don't know.

Corn. It is best to let him do as he desires; he insists on having his own way.

Gon. My Lord, you need not beseech him for staying over here.

Glou. Alas ! the night fast approaches, and the cold winds are terribly tumultuous and turbulent, for many miles about there is hardly visible even a bush.

Reg. O ! Sir, to headstrong men, the injuries that they themselves persistently harbour, must discipline them into patience. Close your doors ; he is attended by a band of desperate followers, and prudence bids us fear the reckless deeds, he being incited might perpetrate, as so readily does he listen to his evil advisers.

Corn. Shut up your doors, my Lord, it is a wild and frightful night : my Regan advises rightly, come out of the storm.

[*Exeunt.*

Act III

Scene I. [*A Heath.*]

A Storm, with thunder and lightning. Enter Kent *and a* Gentleman, *meeting.*

Kent. Who's there, besides foul weather?

Gent. One minded like the weather, most unquietly.

Kent. I know you. Where's the King?

Gent. Contending with the fretful elements;
Bids the wind blow the earth into the sea,
Or swell the curled waters 'bove the main,
That things might change or cease tears his white hair,
Which the impetuous blasts, with eyeless rage,
Catch in their fury, and make nothing of;
Strives in his little world of man to outstorm
The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
This night, wherein the cub-drawn bear would couch
The lion and the belly-pinched wolf
Keep their fur dry, unbonneted he runs,
And bids what will take all.

Kent. But who is with him?

Gent. None but the Fool, who labours to outjest
His heart-struck injuries.

Kent. Sir, I do know you;
And dare, upon the warrant of my note,
Commend a dear thing to you. There is division,
Although as yet the face of it be cover'd
With mutual cunning, 'twixt Albany and Cornwall;

ACT III

SCENE I.—[*A Heath.*]

A storm, with thunder and lightning. Enter KENT, *and a* Gentleman, *meeting.*

Kent. Who is there besides the existence of the foul weather ?

Gent. One inclined very much like the weather, quite restless.

Kent. I know you, but tell me where is the King ?

Gent. He, struggling against the terrifying furies of the weather, begs of the wind to blow the earth into the sea or the turbulent sea-waves to rise above the mainland, so that the order of the world might change or altogether perish; tears his white hair, which the tempestuous blasts in their blind wrath catch in their furies ; and shows little respect for anything, as such. He recklessly attempts in his microcosm so to let in the sorrow's wind and rain, blowing wayward in mad fury, as to outwit the efforts of the external storm. In the midst of this terrible night, in which the bear, sucked dry by its cub and therefore getting ravenous and ferocious, would lie passively in its lair ; the lion and the wolf, his belly pinched out of hunger, keep their fur undrenched with blood ; he with his head uncovered, runs abandoning himself to an utter despair, cries to stake all.

Kent. But who accompanies him ?

Gent. He is accompanied by none else but Fool, who by his wild and extravagant jest, persistently drives out the griefs which have pierced deep into the King's heart.

Kent. Sir, I am well acquainted with you, and dare, relying on my observation of you, entrust you with a secret of the greatest significance. 'There is hostility, although of a dissembling character, so far as their apparent behaviour is concerned, between Albany and Cornwall, who have risen

Who have—as who have not, that their great stars
Thron'd and set high ?—servants, who seem no less,
Which are to France the spies and speculations
Intelligent of our state. What hath been seen,
Either in snuffs and packings of the Dukes,
Or the hard rein which both of them have borne
Against the old King ; or something deeper,
Whereof perchance these are but furnishings—
But, true it is, from France there comes a power
Into this scatter'd kingdom ; who already,
Wise in our negligence, have secret feet
In some of our best ports, and are at point
To show their open banner. Now to you :
If on my credit you dare build so far
To make your speed to Dover, you shall find
Some that will thank you, making just report
Of how unnatural and be-madding sorrow
The King hath cause to plain.
I am a gentleman of blood and breeding,
And from some knowledge and assurance offer
This office to you.

Gent. I will talk further with you.

Kent. No, do not.
For confirmation that I am much more
Than my out-wall, open this purse, and take
What it contains. If you shall see Cordelia,—
As fear not but you shall—show her this ring,
And she will tell you who that fellow is
That yet you do not know. Fie on this storm !
I will go seek the King.

Gent. Give me your hand. Have you no more to say ?

Kent. Few words, but, to effect more than all yet ;
That, when we have found the King, in which your pain
That way, I'll this, he that first lights on him
Holla the other.

[*Exeunt severally.*

like those whom destiny has placed in an exalted position.—Servants, who in appearance, do not look less than servants, are in reality spies and prying observers to France, furnishing them with the information in regard to what is happening here in our state, reporting everything that has been noticed by them, whether it be in the nature of offence taken by one Duke against another, or their plots or the cruel restraints, they have imposed on the kind, old King or something still profounder than these, of which these are perhaps the outward signs or appendages. But it is certainly true that there has come an armed force from France in this kingdom, where fissiparous tendencies prevail and they adroitly taking the advantage of our apathy and negligence have surreptitiously landed in some of our best ports, and are on the point of declaring war, unfurling their banner. If you can repose full faith in me, so far as to hurry up, for my sake, to Dover, where you will surely find someone to thank you, when you submit an accurate report of the maddening griefs of the King caused by the unnatural behaviour of his ungrateful daughters. I am a gentleman by blood as well as breeding and on the grounds of some information, which I can safely rely on, I entrust this mission to you.

Gent. I would further like to converse with you in this connection.

Kent. There is no need of hesitation on the subject, for I will give you góod proof that you may safely trust me ; and ascertain that I am much more than what my exterior looks seem. Open this purse and pick out the content from it. If you shall see Cordelia, and you are bound to see her, show her but this ring, and in return she will tell you who that companion is, whose whereabouts you don't know. My curses on this storm ; I will go and find out the King.

Gent. Give me your hand. Do you have nothing more to tell me ?

Kent. I have few more words to be communicated to you, but in their consequence, by far the most important, they are ; when we have found the King, in which strenuous task, your labour lies in that direction, while I will go in this, he that first happens to find him, would shout to the other.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—[*Another part of the Heath. Storm continues.*]

Enter LEAR *and* FOOL.

Lear. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks!
You sulph'rous and thought-executing fires,
Vaunt-couriers of oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity o' th' world!
Crack Nature's moulds, all germens spill at once
That makes ingrateful man!

Fool. O nuncle, court holy-water in a dry house is better than this rain-water out o' door. Good nuncle, in; ask thy daughters' blessing. Here's a night pities neither wise men nor fools.

Lear. Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout, rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
I tax you not, you elements, with unkindness;
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You owe me no subscription, then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man.
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That will with two pernicious daughters join
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O, ho! 'tis foul.

Fool. He that has a house to put's head in has a good head-piece.

The cod-piece that will house
Before the head has any,
The head and he shall louse;
So beggars marry many.
The man that makes his toe
What he his heart should make,
Shall of a corn cry woe,
And turn his sleep to wake.

For there was never yet fair woman but she made mouths in a glass.

SCENE II.—[*Another part of the Heath. Storm continues.*] *Enter* LEAR *and* FOOL.

Lear. Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks ! be outrageous ! blow ! You violent downpours of rain and water-spouts, throw out yourselves, till you have thoroughly soaked our steeples together with their high towers, and submerged the weather-cocks ! You sulphurous fires, acting as swiftly as the thought itself ; the forerunners of oak-riving thunderbolts, scorch my white head ! and you turbulent thunder, smite flat this thick round earth, tear off the moulds in which nature casts and shapes her products and at one stroke destroy all the seeds from which the ungrateful mankind are generated.

Fool. O uncle, holy-water (of flattery) in an undrenched house is better than this rain-water outside the doors. Good uncle, get in and beg forgiveness and blessings from your daughters ; for here it is wild and boisterously stormy night that pities neither the wise nor the fools.

Lear. Be vociferous to your heart's content ! emit fire ! spout, rain ! Rain, wind, thunder, fire, you are not my daughters ; I do not accuse you of ungratefulness ; I never gave you a kingdom or called you by endearing name of children ; you owe no allegiance to me : then let whatever inflictions you are pleased to send down, fall upon me ! Here do I stand, your slave, a poor, infirm, weak and despised old man. But yet I call you slavish agents for having joined two pernicious daughters with your battalions, brought forth and nurtured in the skies, to fight against a poor old man as myself. O, ho ! It is extremely unjust.

Fool. The person, who has a house to give his head a shelter, is indeed endowed with a sound brain.

The man who satisfies his carnal desires even before having a house to live in, will eventually marry a wife and share her lice, and rather so many beggars marry. The man, who cherishes a mean part of his body to the exclusion of what is really worth cherishing, shall lose his comfort and sleep and suffer a lasting harm from the very part he so fondly cherished.

For there was never yet a charming woman, except she practising pretty faces in a mirror.

Enter KENT.

Lear. No, I will be the pattern of all patience ;
I will say nothing.

Kent. Who's there ?

Fool. Marry, here's grace and a cod-piece ; that's a wise man and a fool.

Kent. Alas ! Sir, are you here ? things that love night
Love not such nights as these ; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves. Since I was man
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard, man's nature cannot carry
Th' affliction nor the fear.

Lear. Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pudder o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp'd of justice ; hide thee, thou bloody hand,
Thou perjur'd and thou simular of virtue
That art incestuous ; catiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming
Has practis'd on man's life ; close pent-up quilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. I am a man
More sinn'd against than sinning.

Kent. Alack ! bareheaded !
Gracious my Lord, hard by here is a hovel ;
Some friendship will it lend you 'gainst the tempest ;
Repose you there while I to this hard house,—
More harder than the stones whereof 'tis rais'd,
Which even but now, demanding after you,
Denied me to come in,—return and force
Their scanted courtesy.

Enter KENT.

Lear. No, I will be an embodiment of all patience ; and I will speak no more.

Kent. Who is there ?

Fool. By Mary, here's an honour and a baggy appendage, that is a wise man and a fool.

Kent. Alack! Sir, are you here? that is terribly surprising, as even those creatures who prefer the night time, don't like at all the nights such as these ; the angry heavens frighten the wild beasts, that prowl about at night, but now keep themselves confined to their caves. I have attained manhood, but in my life time such sheets of fire, such peals of terrorizing thunder, such blasting furies of wind and rain, I never remember to have heard of ; man, by his nature, cannot endure these afflictions, nor even the fear thereof.

Lear. Let the great gods, who have brought about and continue this terrifying turmoil over our heads, find out their foes and offenders. You wretches, tremble now, you have within yourselves crimes, hitherto not brought to light and as yet have not been scourged by the punitive hand of justice, how long would you but hide your bloody hands ? You perjurer, and you dissembler of virtue, who have been unchaste let you wretches, who under a pretence of friendship suited to their purpose, have treacherously plotted against man's life, be shaken into pieces by the terrors. Crimes and evil deeds, burst open the bosoms that contain or conceal you from being seen by the world and cry for mercy from these dreadful summoners, who call you for a trial. I am a man, more sinned against than sinning and have nothing to fear from these dreadful summoners.

Kent. Alas ! you are here, with your head uncovered. gracious my Lord, quite close to this place is a hovel, where you will find a shelter against this furious tempest. Have your rest there ; meanwhile I return to this cruel house, more cruel than the stones of which it is built and the people, dwelling in it, only a few minutes ago, refused me admittance when I made enquiries after you—and would compel them to show that courtesy which they have stinted so much.

Lear. My wits begin to turn.
Come on, my boy. How dost, my boy! Art cold?
I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow?
The art of our necessity is strange,
And can make vile things precious. Come, your hovel.
Poor Fool and knave, I have one part in my heart
That's sorry yet for thee.

Fool. He that has and a little tiny wit,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
Must make content with his fortunes fit,
Though the rain it raineth every day.

Lear. True, boy, come, bring us to this hovel.
[*Exeunt* LEAR *and* KENT.

Fool. This is a brave night to cool a courtezan. I'll speak a prophecy ere I go:

When priests are more in word than matter;
When brewers mar their malt with water;
When nobles are their tailors' tutors;
No heretics burn'd, but wenches' suitors;
When every case in law is right;
No squire in debt, nor no poor knight;
When slanders do not live in tongues;
Nor cut-purses come not to throngs;
When usurers tell their gold i' th' field;
And bawds and whores do churches build:
Then shall the realm of Albion
Come to great confusion.
Then comes the time, who lives to see't,
That going shall be us'd with feet.

This prophecy Merlin shall make; for I live before his time.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—[*A Room in* GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*]

Enter GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND, *with lights.*

Glou. Alack, alack! Edmund, I like not this unnatural dealing. When I desir'd their leave that I might pity him, they took from me the use of mine own house; charg'd me, on pain of perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of him, entreat for him, or any way sustain him.

Lear. My wits take a sudden turn. Come on, my boy ; how now ? my Fool, have you caught cold ? It is too bitter to me. Where is this mean dwelling, my fellow ? Necessity is the marvellous power, which provides us with skill to transform what is meanest into what is most valuable. Come where is the hovel, you speak of ? Poor Fool, and knave, I have, despite my distraction and sufferings, a compassionate and feeling heart for you.

Fool. The person, who has a little and that a very little wit with hey, ho, in the midst of thunder and rain, must adapt himself to his fortunes and be content with them. Adversities, very much like rains, are but inevitable in our day to day life.

Lear. You speak the truth, boy, I must make my happiness fit my fortunes. Come, conduct us to this hovel.

[*Exeunt* LEAR *and* KENT.

Fool. This is a fair night to cool the passion of a court mistress. I will speak about a prophecy before I depart hence : When the sermons of priests lack substance and suffer verbosity ; when brewers impair their malt with water ; when noblemen teach the tailors how to fashion their garments ; when not the heretics but the strumpets' suitors are burnt ; when every case brought into the law court is right ; when no squire is indebted, not any knight poor ; when people are not wont to slander mongering ; when pickpockets come not to the crowded assemblages ; when money-lenders count their gold coins in open and when the debauchees and harlots, as a sign of their repentance, build churches ; then the state of affairs shall be confounded in England. Then comes the time ; one lives to see it, would find that men shall walk upon their feet. Merlin shall make this prophecy, as I live before his time. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—[*A room in* GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*]

Enter GLOUCESTER *and* EDMUND, *with lights.*

Glou. Alas, alas ! Edmund, I extremely dislike this unnatural behaviour shown towards the King. When I keenly desired to relieve him, they withdrew from me, even the use of my own house to that purpose ; warranted me, on the pain of incessant displeasure, as it were, neither to talk to him, implore for him, or anyway provide him with sustenance.

Edm. Most savage and unnatural!

Glou. Go to; say you nothing. There is division between the Dukes, and a worse matter than that. I have receiv'd a letter this night; 'tis dangerous to be spoken. I have lock'd the letter in my closet. These injuries the King now bears will be revenged home; there is part of a power already footed. We must incline to the King. I will look him and privily relieve him; go you and maintain talk with the Duke, that my charity be not of him perceiv'd. If he ask for me, I am ill and gone to bed. If I die for it, as no less is threatened me, the King, my old master, must be reliev'd. There is strange things toward, Edmund; pray you be careful. [*Exit.*

Edm. This courtesy, forbid thee, shall the Duke
Instantly know; and of that letter too;
This seems a fair deserving, and must draw me
That which my father loses; no less than all:
The younger rises when the old doth fall. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—[*The Heath. Before a Hovel.*]

Enter LEAR, KENT *and* Fool.

Kent. Here is the place, my Lord; good my Lord, enter:
The tyranny of the open night's too rough
For nature to endure. [*Storm continues.*

Lear. Let me alone.

Kent. Good my Lord, enter here.

Lear. Wilt break my heart?

Kent. I had rather break mine own. Good my Lord, enter.

Lear. Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin: so 'tis to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou 'ldst shun a bear;
But if thy flight lay toward the roaring sea,

Edm. It is indeed most vandalic and unnatural of them.

Glou. Never mind about that and don't say anything. There is a kind of hostility, prevailing in between the Dukes, and much worse than that is, I received a letter to-night, about which it is quite unsafe to talk and which I have locked in my private cabinet. These injuries, being borne by the King, now will be thoroughly avenged. A part of the armed forces of France has already landed. We must show our favour to the King. I will search for him and secretly relieve his wants ; meanwhile you go and keep the Duke otherwise busy and let him not even smell of my charitable behaviour to the King. When he asks about me, you must tell, I am ill and for that reason keep confined to bed. I am prepared for the final sacrifice, as no less a penalty than that seems to threaten me, the King, my old master must be unburdened. Strange things are about to happen Edmund, please be vigilant. [*Exit*.

Edm. You are forbidden to show any such courtesy to the King and the Duke shall take an instantaneous note of it as well as of that letter. This is a good turn, expressive of my gratitude to Cornwall and Regan, and be handsomely rewarded by them, as it must entitle me of what my father forfeits, his title and all his belongings. The younger generation rises on the falling of the old one. [*Exit*.

SCENE IV.—[*The Heath. Before a Hovel.*]

Enter LEAR, KENT *and* Fool.

Kent. Here is that hovel, my Lord ; my good Lord, get into it, as the exposure to such a turbulent and tyrannical storm in this pitch darkness of the night is beyond human nature to face. [*Storm continues*.

Lear. Let me remain alone.

Kent. My good Lord, enter here inside.

Lear. Will you break my heart ?

Kent. Before breaking yours, I would rather break mine own ; good my Lord, enter.

Lear. You think it is something terrible that this furious storm pierces us to the skin; so also does it to you, but where the greater ailment strikes, the lesser one is hardly felt. You will avoid a bear, but if your escape happens to lead you towards

Thou 'ldst meet the bear i' th' mouth. When the mind's free
The body's delicate ; this tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there—filial ingratitude !
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to 't ? I will punish home :
No, I will weep no more. In such a night
To shut me out ? Pour on ; I will endure.
In such a night as this ? O Regan, Goneril !
Your old kind father, whose frank heart gave all,—
O ! that way madness lies ; let me shun that ;
No more of that.

Kent. Good my Lord, enter here.

Lear. Prithee, go in thyself ; seek thine own ease :
This tempest will not give me leave to ponder
On things would hurt me more. But I'll go in.
[*To the* Fool.] In, boy ; go first. You houseless poverty,—
Nay, get thee in. I'll pray, and then I'll sleep.
[Fool *goes in*.
Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm,
How shall your houseless heads an unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness defend you
From seasons such as these ? O ! I have ta'en
Too little care of this. Take physic, pomp ;
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,
That thou mayst shake the superflux to them,
And show the Heavens more just.

Edg. [*Within.*] Fathom and half, fathom and half !
Poor Tom ! [*The* Fool *runs out from the hovel.*

Fool. Come not in here, nuncle ; here's a spirit.
Help me ! help me !

Kent. Give me thy hand. Who's there ?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit: he says his name's Poor Tom.

Kent. What art thou that dost grumble there i' th' straw ?
Come forth.

the uproarious sea, you would prefer to boldly face the bear. When the mind is at ease, the body is quite susceptible to annoyances. This raging storm in my mind takes away all my feelings except what is incessantly throbbing there—the filial ingratitude. Is it not very much like this mouth tearing the hand, which lifts food to it? But my punishment of them will be condign. No, I will shed tears no more. In such a stormy night, to keep me out of doors? Pour on your terrors, rain and wind! I will face them. In night such as this! O Regan, Goneril, your kind old father, who generously bestowed all upon you,—but let me cease brooding in that drift, or it will drive me mad. I shall avoid that, no more of that.

Kent. My good Lord, enter here.

Lear. I implore you to get in yourself; seek your own comfort. This tempest diverts my thoughts from a subject far more harmful than anything external can be. But I would go in. [*To the* Fool.] Get in, my boy; you go first, you poor houseless wretch, no, you get in first. I will pray and thereafter lull myself to sleep.

[Fool *goes in.*

Poor naked wretches, wheresoever you might remain, you have to endure the lashing of this cruel storm ; how shall you—your heads without a shelter, stomach bearing the pangs of hunger, your ragged clothing full of holes and openings—protect yourself against seasons, such as these? While I was a King, vested with power and prosperity, I could do little for him. Splendid fellow, let the healing experience of life's sordid realities cure you of your apathy and callousness. Let yourself be exposed to the feelings, that the wretches often feel, so that you may be led to cast to them what is over and above your needs in your possession. Thus show to the Heavens that justice prevails.

Edg. [*Within.*] Fathom and half, fathom and half! So are my soundings ; Poor Tom.

[*The* Fool *runs out from the hovel.*

Fool. Don't come into the hovel, uncle ; here dwells a spirit ; help me, help me.

Kent. Let me have your hand. Who is there inside?

Fool. A spirit, a spirit is in and tells his name Poor Tom.

Kent. What are you that thus be clamorous inside the hovel ? Come out of it.

Enter EDGAR *disguised as a* madman.

Edg. Away! the foul fiend follows me!
Through the sharp hawthorn blow the winds.
Humh! go to thy cold bed and warm thee.

Lear. Didst thou give all to thy daughters?
And art thou come to this?

Edg. Who gives anything to poor Tom? whom the foul fiend hath led through fire and through flame, through ford and whirlpool, o'er bog and quagmire; that hath laid knives under his pillow, and halters in his pew; set rats-bane by his porridge; made him proud of heart, to ride on a bay trotting-horse over four-inch'd bridges, to course his own shadow for a traitor. Bless thy five wits! Tom's a-cold. O! do de, do de, do de. Bless thee from whirlwinds, star-blasting, and taking! Do poor Tom some charity, whom the foul fiend vexes. There could I have him now, and there, and there again, and there.
[*Storm continues.*

Lear. What! has his daughters brought him to this pass?
Couldst thou save nothing? Would'st thou give 'em all?

Fool. Nay, he reserv'd a blanket, else we had been all sham'd.

Lear. Now all the plagues that in the pendulous air
Hang fated o'er men's faults light on thy daughters!

Kent. He hath no daughters, Sir.

Lear. Death, traitor! nothing could have subdu'd nature.
To such a lowness but his unkind daughters.
Is it the fashion that discarded fathers
Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
Judicious punishment! 't was this flesh begot
These pelican daughters.

Edg. Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill:
Alow, alow, loo, loo!

Fool. This cold night will turn us all to fools and madmen.

Enter EDGAR *disguised as a* madman.

Edg. Keep yourself away ! the foul fiend follows me; the wind blows through the thorny hawthorn. Humph ! go cold to your bed and have warmth for yourself.

Lear. Did you give, all you had, to your daughters? Have you been reduced to this miserable plight?

Edg. Who shall give anything to poor Tom ! Poor Tom, whom the foul fiend has chased through fire and through flame; through ford and whirlpool ; over marshy lands and swamps ; and has laid knives under his pillow, halters in his seat ; has set poison close to his dish of broth, inducing him to commit suicide ; stirred his pride to ride on a bay trotting horse over four-inched bridges, to chase his own shadow, taking it for a traitor. Bless your five wits ! Tom has caught cold ; O ! do de, do de, do de. Bless yourself with the invasion of whirlwinds, the blasting influence of the constellations and infection ! Be charitable for poor Tom, whom the foul fiend exasperates. I could have him there now; and again there, and he once again appears there, and still there. [*Storm continues.*

Lear. What ! has his daughters brought him to this miserable plight? Could you keep nothing for yourself? Did you bestow upon them all that you had with you?

Fool. No, he kept a blanket to cover himself or it would be a matter of shame for all of us.

Lear. Now, may all the scourges, that are overhanging in the air decreed by fate to fall over men's faults, blast on your daughters !

Kent. Daughters, he has none, Sir.

Lear. Death, treachery ! nothing except his ungrateful daughters, should have reduced his natural powers to such an extremity of misery. Is it out of fashion that the despised fathers should be little merciful to their own flesh, so as to prick it with pins and thorns? Judicial punishment! It was this flesh to have begotten these pernicious pelican daughters.

Edg. Pillicock sat on Pillicock-hill: alow, alow, loo, loo!

Fool. This bleak night will turn us all into fools and lunatics.

Edg. Take heed o' th' foul fiend. Obey thy parents; keep thy word's justice ; swear not; commit not with man's sworn spouse ; set not thy sweetheart on proud array, Tom's a-cold.

Lear. What hast thou been ?

Edg. A serving-man, proud in heart and mind; that curl'd my hair, wore gloves in my cap, serv'd the lust of my mistress's heart, and did the act of darkness with her ; swore as many oaths as I spake words, and broke them in the sweet face of Heaven; one that slept in the contriving of lust, and wak'd to do it. Wine lov'd I deeply, dice dearly, and in woman out-paramour'd the Turk: false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand; hog in sloth, fox in stealth. wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey. Let not the creaking of shoes nor the rustling of silks betray thy poor heart to woman : keep thy foot out of brothels, thy hand out of plackets, thy pen from lender's books, and defy the foul fiend. Still through the hawthorn blows the cold wind ; says suum, mun, hey no nonny. Dolphin my boy, boy, sessa! let him trot by. [*Storm still.*

Lear. Thou wert better in thy grave than to answer with thy uncover'd head this extremity of the skies. Is man no more than this? Consider him well. Thou ow'st the worm no silk, the beast no hide, the sheep no wool, the cat no perfume. Ha! here is three on's are sophisticated ; thou art the thing itself ; unaccommodated man is no more but such a poor, bare, forked animal as thou art.—Off, off, you lendings!—Come; unbutton here.

[*Tearing off his clothes.*

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, be contented ; 'tis a naughty night to swim in. Now a little fire in a wild field were like an old lecher's heart; a small spark, all the rest on's body cold.—Look! here comes a walking fire.

Edg. Be careful about the foul fiend. Obey your parents; be as just in deeds as in words; don't swear; don't commit adultery with another man's wedded wife; don't allow your affections to fix themselves upon gorgeous clothes. Tom has caught cold.

Lear. What have you been?

Edg. A lover, arrogant in heart and mind, dressed my hair like a foppish gallant; wore my mistress's gloves in my cap; served the lust of my mistress's heart; and did the act of darkness with her. I swore as many oaths as the words I did utter, and broke them in the presence of sweet Heaven; I slept in plotting of lust and while I was awake, I found myself so. I loved drinks deeply; dice dearly and in being a woman's paramour, I surpassed the Turk. I am false of heart, too ready to believe; sanguinary by instinct; hog in lethargy; fox in trickery; wolf in avarice; dog in insanity; lion in prey. Let neither the fashionable creaking shoes nor the flamboyant dress of a woman fascinate your helpless heart so as to become her victim. Don't frequent brothels; let your hand be out of plackets; keep yourself restrained from borrowing from moneylenders and challenge the foul fiend. The cold wind still sweeps through the hawthorn. It sounds suum, mun, hey no nonny. Dolphin, my boy, off you go ! let him trot by.

[*Storm still.*

Lear. It would be better for you to be in your grave than to have to encounter, with your unprotected head, this extreme rigour of the skies. Is man nothing more but this? Consider the status of man well. You are not under any obligation to silkworm for your dress; no ox provides you with your outer covering ; no sheep supplies wool; nor the civet cat perfumes. Ha! here three of us are adulterated. You are quite natural ; unaccommodated man is nothing more than such a poor, uncovered, two-legged animal as you are. Be off, be off, you borrowed articles ! Come; here I do away with you. [*Tearing off his clothes.*

Fool. I beg you, uncle, to be pacified. It is too wicked a night to bathe yourself in this downpour. Now comes a little fire in a wild field, like the heart of an old lewd man; a small spark, that is visible, but the rest of his body is exposed to the bleak weather. Look, here comes a walking fire.

Enter GLOUCESTER, *with a torch.*

Edg. This is the foul Flibbertigibbet: he begins at curfew, and walks till the first cock; he gives the web and the pin, squenes the eye, and makes the hare-lip; mildews the white wheat, and hurts the poor creature of earth.

Swithold footed thrice the 'old;
He met the night-mare, and her nine-fold;
Bid her alight,
And her troth plight,
And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!

Kent. How fares your Grace?

Lear. What's he?

Kent. Who's there? what is't you seek?

Glou. What are you there? Your names?

Edg. Poor Tom; that eats the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the wall-newt, and the water; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend rages, eats cow-dung for sallets; swallows the old rat and the ditch-dog; drinks the green mantle of the standing pool; who is whipp'd from tithing to tithing, and stock-punish'd, and imprison'd who hath had three suits to his back, six shirts to his body.

Horse to ride, and weapons to wear,
But mice and rats and such small deer,
Have been Tom's food for seven long year.

Beware my follower. Peace, Smulkin! peace, thou fiend!

Glou. What! hath your Grace no better company?

Edg. The Prince of Darkness is a gentleman; Modo he's called, and Mahu.

Glou. Our flesh and blood, my Lord, is grown so vile, that it doth hate what gets it.

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold.

Glou. Go in with me. My duty cannot suffer
T' obey in all your daughters' hard commands:
Though their injunction be to bar my doors,
And let this tyrannous night take hold upon you,
Yet I have ventured to come seek you out
And bring you where both fire and food is ready.

Enter GLOUCESTER, *with a torch.*

Edg. This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he begins his journey with the ringing of evening bells and roams about until the midnight hour, at the first cock-crow. He infects people with cataract; causes squint in their eye; makes the lip divided in the middle, resembling that of a hare; blights the ripe white wheat and injures the poor helpless creature of earth. St. Vitalis traversed the world three times, met the night-mare and her nine familiars disguised as foals; commanded her to alight from the foal she was riding and give her a solemn pledge not to molest any one and then asked her to betake herself off.

Kent. How does your Honour feel?

Lear. Who's he?

Kent. Who is there? What for do you seek here?

Glou. What people are you there? Tell me your names.

Edg. Poor Tom; who eats up the swimming frog, the toad, the tadpole, the lizard and the water newt; that in the fury of his heart, when the foul fiend gets outrageous, eats the cow-dung as a substitute for salad and devours the old rat, and dog fallen into a ditch ; drinks the filthy scum of the standing water; who is whipped from district to district, punished by being put in the public stocks and imprisoned; who has three suits, six shirts to serve his body and has horse to ride, and weapons to wear; mice and rats and such small game would serve as food for seven long years to Tom. Beware of my foul fiend. Peace, Smulkin ! be at peace, you fiend !

Glou. What ! Has your honour no better a companion than this poor wretch?

Edg. Why, the Prince of Darkness is a gentleman. Don't forget it; Modo, he is called and also known as Mahu.

Glou. Our children, my Lord, have grown so debased that they begin to sneer and scorn even at those who beget them.

Edg. Poor Tom has caught cold.

Glou. Get in with me. I cannot let my duty suffer in my obeying the rigorous commands of your daughters. Though they have prevented me to open my doors for you and let you thus suffer the terrors of this tyrannical night, yet I have been bold enough to search you out and now take you where both fire and food readily await you.

Lear. First let me talk with this philosopher.
What is the cause of thunder?

Kent. Good my Lord, take his offer; go into th' house.

Lear. I'll talk a word with this same learned Theban.
What is your study?

Edg. How to prevent the fiend, and to kill vermin.

Lear. Let me ask you one word in private.

Kent. Importune him once more to go, my Lord;
His wits begin t' unsettle.

Glou. Canst thou blame him? [*Storm still.*
His daughters seek his death. Ah! that good Kent;
He said it would be thus, poor banish'd man!
Thou say'st the King grows mad; I'll tell thee, friend,
I am almost mad myself. I had a son,
Now outlaw'd from my blood; he sought my life;
But lately, very late, I lov'd him, friend,
No father his son dearer; true to tell thee,
The grief hath craz'd my wits. What a night's this
I do beseech your Grace!—

Lear. O! Cry you mercy, Sir.
Noble philosopher, your company.

Edg. Tom's a-cold.

Glou. In, fellow, there into th' hovel: keep thee warm.

Lear. Come, let's in all.

Kent. This way, my Lord.

Lear. With him;
I will keep still with my philosopher.

Kent. Good my Lord, soothe him; let him take the fellow.

Glou. Take him you on.

Kent. Sirrah, come on; go along with us.

Lear. Come, good Athenian.

Glou. No words, no words: hush.

Edg. Child Rowland to the dark tower came,
His word was still fie, foh, and fum,
I smell the blood of a British man. [*Exeunt.*

Lear. First, let me finish my conversation with this stoic. Tell me the cause for this thunder.

Kent. My good Lord, accept his offer and move hence to the house.

Lear. First, I will prefer to talk a little to this learned Theban. On what specific problems do you brood on?

Edg. My problem is to find out the preventive measure to impede foul fiend, and to kill the contemptible creature.

Lear. Let me carry on a little private conversation with you.

Kent. Implore him once again to move hence, my Lord; his wits have begun to run riot.

Glou. Can you blame him for that? [*Storm still.* His daughters are out to see him dead. Ah ! that good Kent predicted much earlier what is about to happen; poor helpless man, sent into exile. You say that the King has gone mad; let me tell you, I am myself mad. I had a son whom I have disinherited and disowned as my son; he was out to do away with my life. But recently, quite recently, I loved him, much more than any father would love his son. I speak but the truth to you; the extreme grief of that has turned my wits. What a terrible night is this, I do entreat your Honour—

Lear. O ! I beg your pardon, Sir, noble philosopher, I crave for your companionship.

Edg. Tom has caught cold.

Glou. Get in, fellow, there into the hovel, to keep yourself warm.

Lear. Come, let us all enter together.

Kent. This is the way, my Lord.

Lear. I shall enter, but not without being accompanied by him, my philosopher friend.

Kent. My good Lord, humour him. Let the fellow be taken by him.

Glou. You may very well take him with you.

Kent. You fellow, come on and go along with us.

Lear. Come along, good Athenian.

Glou. No words, no words! Keep quiet.

Edg. Child Rowland came to the dark tower, the watchword of the foul fiend was still, fie, foh, and fum—I smell the blood of a British man. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—[*A Room in* GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*]

Enter CORNWALL, *and* EDMUND.

Corn. I will have my revenge ere I depart his house.

Edm. How, my Lord, I may be censured, that nature thus gives way to loyalty, something fears me to think of.

Corn. I now perceive it was not altogether your brother's evil disposition made him seek his death ; but a provoking merit, set a-work by a reprovable badness in himself.

Edm. How malicious is my fortune, that I must repent to be just! This is the letter he spoke of, which approves him an intelligent party to the advantages of France. O Heavens ! that this treason were not, or not I the detector !

Corn. Go with me to the Duchess.

Edm. If the matter of this paper be certain, you have mighty business in hand.

Corn. True or false, it hath made thee Earl of Gloucester. Seek out where thy father is, that he may be ready for our apprehension.

Edm. [*Aside.*] If I find him comforting the King, it will stuff his suspicion more fully. [*Aloud.*] I will persevere in my course of loyalty, though the conflict be sore between that and my blood.

Corn. I will lay trust upon thee ; and thou shalt find a dearer father in my love.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—[*A Chamber in a Farmhouse adjoining the castle.*]

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* KENT.

Glou. Here is better than the open air ; take it thankfully. I will piece out the comfort with what addition I can : I will not be long from you.

SCENE V.—[*A Room in* GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*]

Enter CORNWALL, *and* EDMUND.

Corn. I will have my revenge upon Gloucester for having disobeyed me, by assisting the King, before I leave his house.

Edm. How the world will judge of me for thus allowing my allegiance to you, get better of filial affection, is something, the very thought of which frightens me.

Corn. I now discern from this evidence of your allegiance that it was not merely your brother's naturally evil disposition that made him seek his father's life, but a worthiness on your part, roused by your horror of his reprehensible iniquity, which incited him to that fatal resolve.

Edm. How cruelly unjust fortune is to me, in that it makes me repent for having behaved honourably. This is the letter my father referred to, which proves him to be well informed of the assistance and secret intelligence to the French King and army to their advantage. O Heavens, it was better, this treacherous deed had not been perpetrated and since it is perpetrated, it would have been much better had I not been the discoverer.

Corn. Accompany me to the Duchess.

Edm. If the purport of this letter be true, the business before you will call for the exercise of all your skill and energy.

Corn. Whether it be true or false, it has made you the Earl of Gloucester. Search out your father, where he is and let him be ready for being seized by us.

Edm. [*Aside.*] If I find him rendering any more assistance to the King, it will confirm his suspicion to a greater degree. [*Aloud.*] I will continue in my course of allegiance though the struggle be bitter between that and my natural feelings, as a son.

Corn. I will fully believe in you and, in me, you will find more genuine a love than your father has ever shown.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—[*A Chamber in a Farmhouse adjoining the castle.*]

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* KENT.

Glou. The place here is decidedly better than that in the open air; make the best use of the change. I will supplement the comfort with whatever additions that are within my means. I will not be away for long from you.

Kent. All the power of his wits have given way to his impatience. The gods reward your kindness!

[*Exit* GLOUCESTER.

Enter LEAR, EDGAR, *and* FOOL.

Edg. Frateretto calls me, and tells me Nero is an angler in the Lake of Darkness. Pray, innocent, and beware the foul fiend.

Fool. Prithee, nuncle, tell me whether a madman be a gentleman or a yeoman?

Lear. A king, a king!

Fool. No; he's a yeoman that has a gentleman to his son; for he's a mad yeoman that sees his son a gentleman before him.

Lear. To have a thousand with red burning spits Come hizzing in upon 'em—

Edg. The foul fiend bites my back.

Fool. He's mad that trusts in the tameness of a wolf, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a whore's oath.

Lear. It shall be done; I will arraign them straight. [*To* EDGAR] Come, sit thou here, most learned justicer; [*To the* Fool] Thou, sapient sir, sit here. Now, you she-foxes!

Edg. Look where he stands and glares!
Want'st thou eyes at trial, madam?
Come o'er the bourn, Bessy, to me,—

Fool. [*Sings.*] Her boat hath a leak,
And she must not speak;
Why she dares not come over to thee!

Edg. The foul fiend haunts poor Tom in the voice of a nightingale. Hoppedance cries in Tom's belly for two white herring. Croak not, black angel; I have no food for thee.

Kent. Hew do you, Sir? Stand you not so amaz'd: Will you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Kent. All the strength of his wits has demented himself, he being unable to bear the strain of wrongs done him. May God reward you for this generous behaviour.

[*Exit* GLOUCESTER.

Enter LEAR, EDGAR, *and* Fool.

Edg. Frateretto calls me and tells me Trajan is an angler in the bottomless depths of human nature. Please, Fool, be aware of the foul fiend.

Fool. Please, uncle, tell me whether a madman is a gentleman or a yeoman?

Lear. Madman is a king, a king!

Fool. No, the King is not so; madman is a yeoman that has a gentleman for his son; because a yeoman, who would see his son a gentleman, before him, is a mad fellow.

Lear. May a thousand assailants, brandishing their redhot weapons, fall hissing upon them.

Edg. The foul fiend bites at my back.

Fool. The person, who relies upon the wolf's tameness, a horse's health, a boy's love, or a strumpet's swearing, is mad.

Lear. That would be done certainly; I will accuse them instantly. [*To* EDGAR] Come, you be seated here, most scholarly justice; [*To the* Fool] you, sagacious, sir, be seated here. Now you the cunning foxes, come and be judged !

Edg. Look where the fiend stands and glares ! Do you want eyes to gaze at and admire you during your trial, madam? There are fiends to serve that purpose. Come over the brook, Bessy, to me.

Fool. [*Sings*.] Her boat has a leakage, but what is the use of her being clamorous of that? Why should she not be bold enough to come over to you?

Edg. The foul fiend regularly visits poor Tom in the disguise of a Nightingale. Hoppedance, being hungry for two pickled herring, rumbles in Tom's belly. Croak not, black malicious angel; I have no food to be served to you.

Kent. How do you feel, sir ? Do not look so terror-stricken; would you lie down and rest upon the cushions?

Lear. I'll see their trial first. Bring in their evidence.
[*To* EDGAR.] Thou robed man of justice, take thy place;
[*To the* Fool.] And thou, his yoke-fellow of equity,
Bench by his side. [*To* KENT.] You are o' th' commission,
Sit you too.

Edg. Let us deal justly.

Sleepest or walkest thou, jolly shepherd?
Thy sheep be in the corn;
And for one blast of thy minikin mouth,
Thy sheep shall take no harm.
Purr, the cat is grey.

Lear. Arraign her first; 'tis Goneril. I here take my oath before this honourable assembly, she kick'd the poor King, her father.

Fool. Come hither, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

Lear. She cannot deny it.

Fool. Cry you mercy, I took you for a joint-stool.

Lear. And here's another, whose warp'd looks proclaim,
What store her heart is made on. Stop her there!
Arms, arms, sword, fire! Corruption in the place!
False justicer, why hast thou let her 'scape?

Edg. Bless thy five wits!

Kent. O pity! Sir, where is the patience now
That you so oft have boasted to retain?

Edg. [*Aside.*] My tears begin to take his part so much,
They mar my counterfeiting.

Lear. The little dogs and all.
Tray, Blanch, and Sweetheart, see, they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will throw his head at them.
Avaunt, you curs!

Be thy mouth or black or white,
Tooth that poisons if it bite;
Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim,
Hound or spaniel, brach or lym;
Or bobtail tike or trundle-tail,—
Tom will make him weep and wail:
For, with throwing thus my head,
Dogs, leap'd the hatch, and all are fled.

Lear. No, before I do that, I will see them on trial first. Bring all those, who are prepared to testify against them. [*To* EDGAR.] You 'Justice' clad in your robes, take your seat. [*To the* Fool.] And you, his fellow judge of the commission, be seated on the bench. [*To* KENT.] You are commissioned as a justice, so you too sit there.

Edg. Let us have a square deal. Are you asleep or awake, jolly shepherd? Your sheep are in the corn-field, and if only you will blow one strain on your pipe, your precious sheep will leave the corn-field, whatever damage they may have done. Purr, the mouse ought to remember that the cat is just as hard to see in the dark as the mouse herself.

Lear. Accuse her first; she is Goneril. I hereby declare on an oath before this respectable gathering, she kicked the poor helpless King, her father.

Fool. Come this way, mistress. Is your name Goneril?

Lear. For that, she can't refuse.

Fool. You cry for mercy, I took you for a low stool, not a prisoner.

Lear. And here comes another, Regan, whose perverse looks pronounce her heart, being built of the stock material of evil passion. Stop her there. Where are arms? bring arms; bring sword, fire ! what ! has the corruption crept into the very seat of justice? False judge, why have you let her escape hence?

Edg. May gods bless your five wits !

Kent. O, its a pity ! Sir, where is that patience of yours now? You have boasted much to be "the pattern of all patience."

Edg. [*Aside.*] My sympathy with him is so much more intense that I find it too hard to keep up my assumed part.

Lear. The small hounds and all others—Tray, blanch, and sweetheart—look how treacherously they bark at me.

Edg. Tom will strike them with horn; get you off, wretched curs ! Irrespective of your mouth; complexion, either white or black; tooth, exercising poisonous influence by biting—Mastiff, greyhound, mongrel grim, hound or spaniel, brach or lymmer, rough-haired, bobtail tike or trundle-tail—let it be any, but Tom will make him weep and suffer, for with flinging my horn thus, dogs leap over the half-door and all run away.

Do de, de, de, Sessa ! come, march to wakes and fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, thy horn is dry.

Lear. Then let them anatomize Regan, see what breeds about her heart. Is there any cause in nature that make these hard hearts ! [*To* EDGAR.] You, sir, I entertain for one of my hundred ; only I do not like the fashion of your garments. You will say they are Persian ; but let them be chang'd.

Kent. Now, good my Lord, lie here ard rest awhile.

Lear. Make no noise, make no noise ; draw the curtains : so, so, we'll go to supper i' th' morning.

Fool. And I'll go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER.

Glou. Come hither, friend : where is the King, my master ?

Kent. Here, sir; but trouble him not, his wits are gone.

Glou. Good friend, I prithee, take him in thy arms ;
I have o'erheard a plot of death upon him.
There is a litter ready; lay him in 't,
And drive toward Dover, friend, where thou shalt meet
Both welcome and protection. Take up thy master :
If thou should'st dally half an hour, his life,
With thine, and all that offer to defend him,
Stand in assured loss. Take up, take up,
And follow me, that will to some provision
Give thee quick conduct.

Kent. Oppressed nature sleeps.
This rest might yet have balm'd thy broken sinews
Which, if convenience will not allow,
Stand in hard cure. [*To the* Fool.] Come, help to bear thy master ;
Thou must not stay behind.

Glou. Come, come, away.

[*Exeunt* KENT, GLOUCESTER, *and the* Fool, *bearing off the* King.

Do, de, de, de, be quiet and have done ! Come, move hence for sauntering round the festivities, fairs and market-towns. Poor Tom, your horn is empty—how long, after all, shall you sustain your assumed part?

Lear. Then let them dissect Regan; look what growth there can be in her heart. By what cause is nature motivated in making these hearts cruel to this extent. [*To* EDGAR.] I take you into my service, as one of my hundred knights. Only what I do not like about you is the fashion of your garments. You might say they are in their splendour Persian, but it would be much better for you to have them changed.

Kent. Now, my good Lord, lie here so as to rest for some time.

Lear. Don't be vociferous, no noise any more, draw the curtains : So, so, we will meet in the morning to have our supper.

Fool. And as for myself, I will go to bed at noon.

Re-enter GLOUCESTER.

Glou. Come this way, friend; where is the King, my master?

Kent. He is here, sir; but trouble him no more, his wits are turned.

Glou. Good friend, I implore you to take him in your arms, as I have overheard a foul play to do away with his life. The litter is ready; lay him on it and instantly drive towards Dover where, friend, you shall have both reception and protection. Take up your master: if you waste even half an hour, his life, your own and of others who have assisted or defended him, will be fully jeopardized. Take him up, take him up and follow me, who will lead you quickly and conduct you safely to the place, where you can make further arrangements for your journey.

Kent. Human nature, so much oppressed, sleeps. This rest might have soothed your overstrained nerves, which have little chance of regaining their tone, if the exigency of the time does not allow him the badly needed rest. [*To the* Fool.] Come, help to carry your master; you must not lag behind in that.

Glou. Come, come, away. Let's be quick.

[*Exeunt* KENT, GLOUCESTER, *and the* Fool, *bearing off the* King.

Edg. When we our betters see bearing our woes,
We scarcely think our miseries our foes.
Who alone suffers, suffers most i' th' mind,
Leaving free things and happy shows behind;
But then the mind much sufferance doth o'erskip,
When grief hath mates, and bearing fellowship.
How light and portable my pain seems now,
When that which makes me bend makes the king bow;
He childed, as I father'd! Tom, away!
Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray
When false opinion, whose wrong thoughts defile thee,
In thy just proof repeals and reconciles thee.
What will hap more to-night, safe 'scape the King!
Lurk, lurk. [*Exit.*

SCENE VII.—[*A Room in* GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*]

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND, *and* Servants.

Corn. [*To* GONERIL.] Post speedily to my Lord, your husband; show him this letter:—the army of France is landed. Seek out the traitor Gloucester.

[*Exeunt some of the* Servants.

Reg. Hang him instantly.

Gon. Pluck out his eyes.

Corn. Leave him to my displeasure. Edmund, keep you our sister company; the revenges we are bound to take upon your traitorous father, are not fit for your beholding. Advise the Duke, where you are going, to a most festinate preparation: we are bound to the like. Our posts shall be swift and intelligent betwixt us. Farewell, dear sister: farewell, my Lord of Gloucester.

Edg. When we see our seniors suffering from calamities, like our own, we hardly ponder over miseries as hostile to us. The person, who suffers alone, without anybody to share his sufferings, undergoes the most painful ordeal of the mind. But when sorrow has companions, and suffering fellowship, then even the more severe troubles lightly pass over. How light and endurable my own grief seems now—when that which makes me bend, the king is compelled to bow, his grief being certainly greater than mine own. He has had cruel children, whereas I have had a cruel father. Tom, be off ! Now as the signs of discord among the great and political unrest are visible, make yourself known, when false opinion, now prevailing against you to stain your name by gross misrepresentation, shall, in consequence of just proof of your integrity, revoke its erroneous sentence and recall you to honour and reconciliation. Whatever else may befall me, may the King effect his escape without the least harm. I must, meanwhile, hide myself. [*Exit.*

SCENE VII.—[*A Room in* GLOUCESTER'S *castle.*]

Enter CORNWALL, REGAN, GONERIL, EDMUND and Servants.

Corn. [*To* GONERIL.] Move speedily to my Lord, your husband. Show him this letter that the army of France has landed. Search out the traitor, Gloucester.

[*Exeunt some of the* Servants.

Reg. Let him be hanged, the moment he is discovered.

Gon. Let his eyes be plucked out of their sockets.

Corn. Leave him to be dealt with as my wrath shall prompt me, that will be sufficiently severe and hence you may be assured for that. Edmund, accompany our sister; the vengeance, that we are purposing to execute upon your treacherous father, is not fit so as to be seen by your eyes. Advise the Duke, to whom I am sending you, to keep up a most speedy preparation, for we are also ready for the same course, for the battle. Our speedy messengers on the horseback between us, shall carry all necessary information in regard to the drastically developing events. Farewell, dear sister: farewell, my Lord of Gloucester.

Enter OSWALD.

How now! where's the King?

Osw. My Lord of Gloucester hath convey'd him hence:
Some five or six and thirty of his knights,
Hot questrists after him, met him at gate;
Who, with some other of the Lord's dependents,
Are gone with him toward Dover; where they boast
To have well-armed friends.

Corn. Get horses for your mistress.

Gon. Farewell, sweet Lord, and sister.

Corn. Edmund, farewell.

[*Exeunt* GONERIL, EDMUND *and* OSWALD.

Go seek the traitor Gloucester,
Pinion him like a thief, bring him before us.

[*Exeunt other* Servants.

Though well we may not pass upon his life
Without the form of justice, yet our power
Shall do a court'sy to our wrath, which men
May blame, but not control. Who's there? the traitor?

Re-enter Servants, *with* GLOUCESTER *prisoner.*

Reg. Ingrateful fox! 'tis he.

Corn. Bind fast his corky arms.

Glou. What mean your Graces? Good my friends, consider.
You are my guests: do me no foul play, friends.

Corn. Bind him, I say. [Servants *bind him.*

Reg. Hard, hard. O filthy traitor!

Glou. Unmerciful lady as you are, I'm none.

Corn. To this chair, bind him. Villain, thou shalt find—

[REGAN *plucks his beard.*

Glou. By the kind gods, 'tis most ignobly done
To pluck me by the beard.

Reg. So white, and such a traitor!

Enter OSWALD.

Now, where is the king ?

Osw. My Lord of Gloucester has sent him away secretly : some five or six companions, together with thirty of his knights following him. The searchers, eagerly seeking for him, while entering the gate, met him, who with some of the dependent lords, has gone towards Dover, where they vain-gloriously think of having well-armed friends to defend them.

Corn. Keep the horses ready for your mistress.

Gon. May you fare well, sweet Lord and sister.

Corn. Edmund, farewell.

[*Exeunt* GONERIL, EDMUND, *and* OSWALD.

Go and search out the traitor Gloucester, tie his hands at his back like those of a thief and bring him instantly before us.

[*Exeunt other* Servants.

Though it may not be justifiable for me to condemn him to death, without allowing him the formality of a trial, yet for the occasion my wrath shall overrule the powers which properly belong to me in a way, which men may blame but will not be able to hinder me in adopting my line of action. Who, is there? Here comes the traitor !

Re-enter Servants *with* GLOUCESTER, *prisoner*.

Reg. Ungrateful fox ! Surely it is he.

Corn. Bind his withered arms fast.

Glou. What do you mean by all this, honourable Lords? My good friends, consider well that you are my guests ; and friends don't be unjust in your dealings with me.

Corn. Bind him, that is my command. [Servants *bind him*.

Reg. Bind him hard, and harder still ; O, ah odious traitor !

Glou. So heartless a lady as you are; I am not at all a traitor.

Corn. Bind him to this chair ; nefarious villain, you shall find.

[REGAN *plucks his beard*.

Glou. By the benevolent gods, to pluck me by the beard is, in fact, an act, most mean and ignoble.

Reg. So white is your beard, old man, and such a confirmed traitor you are !

Glou. Naughty lady,
These hairs, which thou dost ravish from my chin,
Will quicken and accuse thee: I am your host:
With robbers' hands my hospitable favours
You should not ruffle thus. What will you do?

Corn. Come, sir, what letters had you late from France?

Reg. Be simple-answer'd for we know the truth.

Corn. And what confederacy have you with the traitors
Late footed in the kingdom?

Reg. To whose hands
You have sent the lunatic King: speak.

Glou. I have a letter guessingly set down,
Which came from one that's of a neutral heart,
And not from one oppos'd.

Corn. Cunning.

Reg. And false.

Corn. Where hast thou sent the King?

Glou. To Dover.

Reg. Wherefore to Dover? Wast thou not charg'd at peril?

Corn. Wherefore to Dover? Let him answer that.

Glou. I am tied to th' stake, and I must stand the course.

Reg. Wherefore to Dover?

Glou. Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes; nor thy fierce sister
In his anointed flesh rash boarish fangs.
The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
In hell-black night endur'd would have buoy'd up,
And quench'd the stelled fires,
Yet, poor old heart, he holp the heavens to rain.
If wolves had at thy gate howl'd that dern time,

Glou. Mischievous lady, these hairs, you violently seize from my chin, will become living, and catch hold of you. I am, after all, your host ; you, with your hands, as those of robbers, ought not to distort the features of one who has been so much hospitable to you. What do you propose to do ?

Corn. Come to the point, sir, tell us what letters had you lately received from France ?

Reg. Answer simply in a straightforward manner, as we are aware of the truth.

Corn. And besides, what foul conspiracy do you have with the traitors, that have recently landed in our kingdom ?

Reg. By whom and into whose possession have you sent the lunatic King: speak; be quick in that.

Glou. I have received a letter, the contents of which being conjectural, sent by one whose heart is neutral, he not being one opposed to us.

Corn. That is but a ruse to deceive us.

Reg. And nothing but a false and distorted statement.

Corn. Where have you sent the King ?

Glou. To Dover did I send him.

Reg. For what reason did you send him to Dover ? Were you not admonished beforehand that, by doing so, you will fully jeopardize your own life.

Corn. For what reason has the King been despatched to Dover? Let him answer that question first.

Glou. I am tied to the stake, like a baited bear, and must endure the attack, made by the relay of dogs.

Reg. For what reason did you send the King to Dover ?

Glou. I did so because I would not like to see your cruel nails pluck out the eyes of that poor helpless old man ; nor would I like to see your violent sister strike obliquely her tusks, as a bear, on the consecrated flesh of the King. The sea, with such a turbulent storm which he, his head being uncovered, suffered in the wild hell-drak night, would have lifted up the fixed fires and extinguished them. Nonetheless, with his poor old heart, he encouraged the heavens to rain more fiercely upon him. If the wolves had, at your gate,

Thou should'st have said, "Good porter, turn thy key."
All cruels else subscribe: but I will see
The winged vengeance overtake such children.

Corn. See 't shalt thou never. Fellows, hold the chair.
Upon these eyes of thine I'll set my foot.

Glou. He that will think to live till he be old,
Give me some help! O cruel! O you gods!

Reg. One side will mock another: th' other too.

Corn. If you see vengeance,—

First Serv. Hold your hand, my Lord.
I have serv'd you ever since I was a child,
But better service have I never done you
Than now to bid you hold.

Reg. How now, you dog!

First Serv. If you did wear a beard upon your chin
I'd shake it on this quarrel.

Reg. What do you mean?

Corn. My villain! [*They draw and fight.*

First Serv. Nay then, come on, and take the chance of anger.

[CORNWALL *is wounded.*

Reg. Give me thy sword. A peasant stand up thus!
[*Takes a sword and stabs him from behind.*

First Serv. O! I am slain. My Lord, you have one eye left
To see some mischief on him. Oh! [*Dies.*

Corn. Lest it see more, prevent it. Out, vile jelly!
Where is thy lustre now?

howled, you would have asked the good porter to unlock your door, and given them shelter, condoning all their cruel acts, compelled out of compassion in terrific nights, such as these. But I will witness, the swift vengeance of divin powers overtake such ungrateful children.

Corn. O, you will see ! I shall see to it that though vengeance should overtake me, you do not see it, though you may hear of it. Fellows, hold the chair firmly ; upon these eyes of yours, I will stamp my foot.

Glou. He, who desires to live, till he attains his old age, not he who merely imagines, shall realize that. Give me some help ! O it is cruel ! O you gods !

Reg. If one of your eyes is left in its socket, on side of the face (*i.e.*, the side which has an eye) will jeer at the other for being without one ; and therefore let the other too be plucked out.

Corn. If you still fondly desire to see vengeance,—

First Serv. Hold your hand back, my Lord. I have faithfully served ever since the days of my childhood, but I have hitherto not rendered better service than now in asking you to check yourself.

Reg. How do you now dare interfere so impudently ? You dog !

First Serv. Had you worn a beard upon your chin, I would have shaken it and thereby provoke you to combat with me on such an excuse.

Reg. What do you mean, wretch ?

Corn. My nefarious serf to wear weapons against me ! [*They draw and fight.*

First Serv. No, then come on and run the risk of dying at the hands of one, roused so justifiably to wrath. [*Wounds him.*

Reg. Give me your sword. A slavish peasant thus to fight against you ! [*Takes a sword and stabs him from behind.*

First Serv. O ! I am killed ! You have one eye, my Lord, still with you to see some revenge executed on him . . . Oh ! [*Dies.*

Corn. Lest the other eye should see what happens, let that also be barred from the vision. Be out, vile jelly ! Where has your radiance vanished now ?

Glou. All dark and comfortless. Where's my son Edmund?
Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature
To quit this horrid act.

Reg. Out, treacherous villain!
Thou call'st on him that hates thee, it was he
That made the overture of thy treasons to us,
Who is too good to pity thee.

Glou. O my follies! Then Edgar was abus'd.
Kind gods forgive me that, and prosper him.

Reg. Go thrust him out at gates, and let him smell
His way to Dover. [*Exit one with* GLOUCESTER.
How is't, my Lord? How look you?

Corn. I have receiv'd a hurt. Follow me, lady.
Turn out that eyeless villain; throw this slave
Upon the dunghill. Regan, I bleed apace:
Untimely comes this hurt. Give me your arm.
[*Exit* CORNWALL, *led by* REGAN.

Second Serv. I 'll never care what wickedness I do
If this man come to good.

Third Serv. If she live long,
And in the end meet the old course of death,
Women will all turn monsters.

Second Serv. Let's follow the old Earl, and get the Bedlam.
To lead him where he would; his roguish madness
Allows itself to anything.

Third Serv. Go thou; I'll fetch some flax and whites of eggs
To apply to his bleeding face. Now heaven help him!
[*Exeunt severally.*

Glou. Ever during darkness overwhelms me; making everything painful to me. Where is my son Edmund. Edmund, let all the sparks of filial feelings, implanted by nature, be roused to the extreme in you, to requite this terrific act.

Reg. Get you off, treacherous villain ! You invoke the help of one, who is repugnant to you and it was really he, who disclosed your treacherous deeds to us and who, now, cannot be good, nor be compassionate to you.

Glou. O, my own follies have ruined me ! Then Edgar was unjustly treated by me. Benevolent gods, forgive me for that and bestow prosperity upon him.

Reg. Go and push him out at the gates and thence let him smell his way to Dover. [*Exit one with* GLOUCESTER. How is it with you, my Lord? Why do you look in that strange way ?

Corn. I have received a fatal wound. Follow me, lady, turn out that blind villain, and throw this slave upon the dunghill. Regan I bleed profusely ; this wound comes but at an unopportune time. Assist me by your arm.

[*Exit* CORNWALL, *led by* REGAN.

Second Serv. I will never care to think what wickedness I indulge in to see this man become good by recovery.

Third Serv. If she lives for long and dies, as ordained by nature, after attaining the old age, women will all turn monsters, as they would be little afraid of divine vengeance.

Second Serv. Let us follow the old Earl of Gloucester, and search out the Bedlam beggar, whose madness prompts him to saunter wherever he may wish to go and whimsically adopt any action.

Third Serv. You go after him ; meanwhile I will secure some flax and white of eggs to serve as an ointment to be applied to his bleeding face. Now may heaven help him!

[*Exeunt severally.*

Act IV

Scene I.—[*The Heath.*]

Enter Edgar.

Edg. Yet better thus, and known to be contemn'd,
Than, still contemn'd and flatter'd, to be worst.
The lowest and most dejected thing of Fortune,
Stands still in esperance, lives not in fear :
The lamentable change is from the best ;
The worst returns to laughter. Welcome, then,
Thou unsubstantial air that I embrace :
The wretch that thou hast blown into the worst
Owes nothing to thy blasts. But who comes here?

Ent r Gloucester, *led by an Old Man.*

My father, poorly led ? World, world, O world !
But that thy strange mutations make us hate thee,
Life would not yield to age.

Old Man. O my good Lord !
I have been your tenant, and your father's tenant
These fourscore years.

Glou. Away, get thee away; good friend, be gone :
Thy comforts can do me no good at all ;
Thee they may hurt.]

Old Man. You cannot see your way.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—[*The Heath.*]

Enter EDGAR.

Edg. Although I am in a miserable plight, it is better to be thus despised as an outcast, with a consciousness thereof, rather than deceived by the double-edged flattery of those who outwardly shower the praises, but inwardly despise me. When the fate has done its worst and when we have been brought to the very bottom of fortune's wheel, there is still hopes, while there is no fear of a further fall. The change which is to be lamented, is one which brings us down from the height of happiness, but when we have reached the worst, any change as such, brings us relief as well as happiness. I welcome you, unsubstantial air, that I embrace the wretched fellow, whom you have blown into such a worst condition, is in no manner indebted to you and on that account afraid of you. But, who comes here presently ?

Enter GLOUCESTER, *led by an Old Man.*

It is my father, but why is he being led like a beggar ? World, world, O world ! If it were not that your frequent changes and chances make us repugnant to you, we would not easily and submissively reconcile to the old age or consequent approach of death.

Old Man. O, my good Lord ! I have been your tenant as well as your father's, occupying the farm-house all these eighty years of life.

Glou. Be away ; please get you off ; good friend be gone ; your efforts to help me may not be of any use to me, but to the contrary, they may harm you, in case the Duke takes a note of it.

Old Man. Helpless as you are, you cannot see your way.

Glou. I have no way, and therefore want no eyes ;
I stumbled when I saw. Full oft 'tis seen,
Our means secure us, and our mere defects
Prove our commodities. Oh ! dear son, Edgar,
The food of thy abused father's wrath ;
Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
I'd say I had eyes again.

Old Man. How now ! who's there ?

Edg. [*Aside.*] O gods ! who is't can say, "I am at the worst"?
I am worse than e'er I was.

Old Man. 'Tis poor mad Tom.

Edg. [*Aside.*] And worse I am be yet; the worst is not
So long as we can say, "This is the worst."

Old Man. Fellow, where goest ?

Glou. Is it a beggar-man ?

Old Man. Mad man and beggar too.

Glou. He has some reason, else he could not beg.
I' th' last night's storm I such a fellow saw,
Which made me think a man a worm. My son
Came then into my mind ; and yet my mind
Was then scarce friends with him. I have heard more since:
As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods ;
They kill us for their sport.

Edm. [*Aside.*] How should this be ?
Bad is the trade that must play the fool to sorrow,
Ang'ring itself and others. [*Aloud.*] Bless thee, master !

Glou. Is that the naked fellow !

Old Man. Ay, my Lord.

Glou. No way is left for me and therefore I want no eyes to guide me. When I had eyes, I walked blindly into trouble. It is a thing of common experience that the resources or advantages, we enjoy, make us careless (therefore creating troubles for us), while our very deficiencies, summoning our latent powers to be alert against rashness and consequent troubles, prove positive advantages to us. O! dear son, Edgar, the object of your deluded father's wrath, I wish I might live only to feel the touch of you, and that would make me say I had regained my eyes.

Old Man. How now ! who is there ?

Edg. [*Aside.*] O gods ! Anybody saying that I am at the worst, would be presumptuous. I have come from the worst to worse and that is nothing regrettable.

Old Man. It is poor Bedlam beggar, Tom.

Edg. [*Aside.*] And I may still be much less worse. So long as we can comfort ourselves by the reflection 'we are at the worst' ; we are not without hope of an improvement, and hence actually not at the worst.

Old Man. Fellow, where do you proceed ?

Glou. Is that fellow a poor beggar ?

Old Man. He is mad as well as a beggar.

Glou. He is not altogether devoid of intelligence, or else he could not have resorted to begging. During the last night's storm I saw such a fellow, who provoked me to think man in terms of a worm. That moment reminded me of my son, and yet my mind was hardly composed to be friendly to with him and since then I have heard more and experienced. We, very much like the fles in the hands of mischievous boys, are in the hands of gods, who kill us for their sport.

Edg. [*Aside.*] How can this possibly have happened that he has been blinded and does not take me to be an ingrate villain ? It is indeed a pitiable plight that I have to play the part of a fool disguising myself to conceal my griefs, which is distressing to me as well as to others. [*Aloud.*] May God bless you, master !

Glou. Has he still nothing to cover his body ?

Old Man. Yes, my Lord, he has nothing.

Glou. Then, prithee, get thee away. If for my sake,
Thou wilt o'ertake us, hence a mile, or twain,
I' th' way toward Dover, do it for ancient love ;
And bring some covering for this naked soul,
Which I'll entreat to lead me.

Old Man. Alack, sir ! he is mad.

Glou. 'Tis the times' plague, when mad men lead the blind.
Do as I bid thee, or rather do thy pleasure ;
Above the rest, be gone.

Old Man. I'll bring him the best 'parel that I have,
Come on't what will. [*Exit.*

Glou. Sirrah, naked fellow.—

Edg. Poor Tom's a-cold. [*Aside.*] I cannot daub it further.

Glou. Come hither, fellow.

Edg. [*Aside.*] And yet I must.—Bless thy sweet eyes, they bleed.

Glou. Know'st thou the way to Dover ?

Edg. Both stile and gate, horse-way and foot-path. Poor tom hath been scar'd out of his good wits : bless thee, good man's son, from the foul fiend ! Five fiends have been in poor Tom a once ; as Obidicut, of lust ; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness ; Mahu, of stealing ; Modo, of murder ; Flibbertigibbet, of mopping and mowing ; who since possesses chamber-maids and waiting-women. So, bless thee Master !

Glou. Here take this purse, thou whom the heav'ns plagues.
Have humbled to all strokes: that I am wretched
Makes thee the happier : Heavens, deal so still !
Let the superfluous and lust-dieted man,

Glou. Then, I implore you to leave me for a while, now that I have someone to guide me. For my sake, you may be good enough to overtake us at a distance of a mile or two from here in the way, leading to Dover, and do it for the sake of good-will that you have ever borne me. And bring something to cover this naked fellow, who at my request will be willing to guide me.

Old Man. Alas, sir ! he is a lunatic beggar.

Glou. The times are accursed and consequent it is nothing surprising that I, a blind man, should have to be guided by him, a lunatic. Either do it as I ask you to or do whatever you choose to. Above all things, be gone from here.

Old Man. I will bring for him the best apparel that I have with me, whatever may befall me. [*Exit.*

Glou. Sir, you naked fellow,—

Edg. Poor Tom has caught cold. [*Aside.*] I find it hard and cumbersome to keep up this disguise any longer.

Glou. Come this way, fellow.

Edg. [*Aside.*] And, nonetheless, it being inevitable, I must dissemble it further.—May God bless your sweet eyes ! They, without lustre, bleed.

Glou. Do you know the way that leads to Dover ?

Edg. I know the style as well as gate ; bridle-path as well as foot-path. Poor Tom has been frightened out of his good wits. May you be blessed, good man's son, against the invasion of the foul fiend. Tom has been chased by five fiends at one time ; as Obidicut, of lust ; Hobbididence, prince of dumbness ; Mahu, of stealing ; Modo, of murder ; Flibbertigibbet, of making grimaces and mouths, who since long have charmed the chamber-maids and waiting-women. May God, therefore, bless you, by defending you against them.

Glou. Accept this purse which I offer to you, whom the mistforunes sent down by the heavens, have made submissively to resign to all the bitterest blows of adversity. That is, because my wretched plight now teaches me to be compassionate with those who are in distress ; I am moved to help you so as to make you happier. May Heavens ever grant me to think and be compassionate with others in distress! Let the voluptuary, pampered with wealth and indulgence, who treats your divine dispensation with arrogant disdain, who refuses to

That slaves your ordinance, that will not see
Because he does not feel, feel your power quickly ;
So distribution should undo excess,
And each man have enough. Dost thou know Dover ?

Edg. Ay, Master.

Glou. There is a cliff, whose high and bending head
Looks fearfully in the confined deep ;
Bring me but to the very brim of it,
And I'll repair the misery thou dost bear
With something rich about me ; from that place
I shall no leading need.

Edg. Give me thy arm:
Poor Tom shall lead thee. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—[*Before the* DUKE OF ALBANY'S *Palace.*]

Enter GONERIL, *and* EDMUND.

Gon. Welcome, my Lord ; I marvel our mild husband
Not met us on the way.

Enter OSWALD.

Now, where's your master?

Osw. Madam, within ; but never man so chang'd
I told him of the army that was landed ;
He smil'd at it ; I told him you were coming ;
His answer was "The worse" : of Gloucester's treachery,
And of the loyal service of his son,
When I inform'd him, then he call'd me sot,
And told me I had turn'd the wrong side out :
What most he should dislike seems pleasant to him ;
What like, offensive.

Gon. [*To* EDMUND.] Then shall you go no further.
It is the cowish terror of his spirit
That dares not undertake ; he'll not feel wrongs
Which tie him to an answer. Our wishes on the way
May prove effects. Back, Edmund, to my brother ;

see the misfortunes of others around him, because he does not feel them in his own person, very soon be acquainted with your power. Then the excess wealth of a few should be distributed among the impoverished many, so that each could have a sufficiency. Do you know Dover ?

Edg. Yes master, I do know.

Glou. There is a cliff, whose high and beetling brow overhangs with an awful menace into the sea to whose encroachments it serves as a barrier. Bring me exactly to its edge, and with something precious, I have upon my person, I will enable you to ameliorate your present wretched plight and from that, thereafter you will not be needed to guide me.

Edg. Lend me your arm : Poor Tom shall lead you on your way to Dover. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—[*Before the* DUKE OF ALBANY'S *Palace.*]

Enter GONERIL, *and* EDMUND.

Gon. I offer a hearty welcome to you, my Lord, in my palace. I wonder we did not come across my docile husband, in the course of our journey.

Enter OSWALD.

Now, where is your master ?

Osw. Madam, he is inside, but his attitude has undergone an extraordinary change. When I told him about the landing of the French army, instead of considering it seriously, he took it laughingly. When I told him in regard to your coming, his answer, he being utterly apathetic, was still worse. When I informed him about Gloucester's treachery and Edmund's loyalty in exposing his father as a traitor, he abused me as a stupid and accused me of taking things in a topsy-turvy manner. In fact, what he ought to have disliked, was very much pleasant to him : and what he ought to have liked, was but offending to him.

Gon. [*To* EDMUND.] Then, seeing my husband is not in good temper, shall you hesitate to come in ? It is a sheer cowardly terror of his spirit that is not bold enough to assume any responsibility. He by his very nature will ignore insults, which might necessitate manly action on his part. Our wishes, as we journeyed here, that we should consummate our love and get rid of my husband, may be fulfilled. Edmund, go back to

Hasten his musters and conduct his powers :
I must change arms at home, and give the distaff
Into my husband's hands. This trusty servant
Shall pass between us : ere long you are like to hear,
If you dare venture in your own behalf,
A mistress's command. Wear this : spare speech !
[*Giving a favour.*
Decline your head : this kiss, if it durst speak,
Would stretch thy spirits up into the air.
Conceive, and fare thee well.

Edm. Yours in the ranks of death.

Gon. My most dear Gloucester !
[*Exit* EDMUND.
Oh ! the difference of man and man.
To thee a woman's services are due :
My Fool usurps my body.

Osw. Madam, here comes my Lord.
[*Exit.*

Enter ALBANY.

Gon. I have been worth the whistle.

Alb. O Goneril !
You are not worth the dust which the rude wind
Blows in your face. I fear your disposition :
That nature, which contemns its origin,
Cannot be border'd certain in itself;
She that herself will silver and disbranch
From her material sap, perforce must wither
And come to deadly use.

Gon. No more ; the text is foolish.

My Lord Cornwall ; hurry up and complete the enrolment of troops and efficiently guide his forces. Meanwhile I must exchange arms at home ; take the sword and resign distaff into my husband's hands. This trustworthy servant shall carry our letters, acting as a go-between for us. Before long you are likely to hear more, if you have the spirit to undertake the hazardous enterprise of executing your mistress's command for your own good fortune, wear this as a token of my love ; say nothing in reply.

[*Giving a favour.*

Lower your head a little ; this kiss, if it be eloquent, would extend your spirits considerably, so as to realise your ambition. Understand but well, all this kiss means, and may you fare well !

Edm. I shall be yours through thick and thin ; ever prepared to sacrifice my life or fall fighting for you.

Gon. My most dear Gloucester !

[*Exit* EDMUND.

Oh ! How much may a man differ from another. To you, Edmund, I offer all my services. A simpleton like my husband, who calls himself my master, has no right to wifely offices from me.

Osw. Madam, here comes my Lord.

[*Exit.*

Enter ALBANY

Gon. There has been a time when you thought me worth a warmer welcome than you now give me.

Alb. O Goneril ! you are not even as much valuable as is the dust, which the violent wind blows in your countenance. I have fears concerning your disposition. A nature, such as yours, which treats with disdain that to which it owes its origin, is not likely to be restrained within fixed bounds and will break into the wildest excesses. She that violently tears herself off from her parent stem, will ultimately go to hell-fire.

Gon. I am fed up of your sermons, whose purport is merely trash and hence no more of that.

Alb. Wisdom and goodness to the vile seem vile ;
Filths savour but themselves. What have you done ?
Tigers, not daughters, what have you perform'd !
A father, and a gracious aged man,
Whose reverence can the head-lugg'd bear would lick,
Most barbarous, most degenerate, have you madded.
Could my good brother suffer you to do it ?
A man, a prince, by him so benefited !
If that the heavens do not their visible spirits
Send quickly down to tame these vile offences
It will come,
Humanity must perforce prey on itself,
Like monsters of the deep.

Gon. Milk-liver'd man !
That bear'st a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs ;
Who hast not in thy brows an eye discerning
Thine honour from thy suffering ; that not know'st
Fools do those villains pity who are punish'd
Ere they have done their mischief. Where's thy drum ;
France spreads his banners in our noiseless land,
With plumed helm thy state begins to threat,
Whil'st thou, a moral fool, sits still and cries
"Alack ! Why does he so ?"

Alb. See thyself, devil !
Proper deformity shows not in the fiend
So horrid as in woman.

Gon. O vain fool !

Alb. Thou changed and self-cover'd thing, for shame,
Be-monster not thy feature. Were't my fitness
To let these hands obey my blood,
They are not apt enough to dislocate and tear
Thy flesh and bones ; howe'er thou art a fiend,

Alb. Wisdom and goodness seem to be worthless to one, who is himself morally impure. All things taste filthy to those who are themselves filthy. What have you brought about ? Both you and your sister are tigers, not daughters, what have you done to your father ? A father and a gracious old man, whose reverend face, even the bear infuriated by being led by head, would lick ; but such a father, you most vandalic and most corrupt, have maddened. Is it possible my good brother, a prince, endowed with manly virtues, should have borne all these vicious schemes (without resistance) against one, by whom he was himself benefited? If the heavens do not send their ministers of vengeance, in some visible forms, down on this earth to domesticate these wild offenders, the necessary disastrous consequences are bound to follow. And then the humanity will forcibly prey on itself so that the arbitrary law about the sea-monsters, the great fish eating up the small one, will prevail here.

Gon. Cowardly fellow, you are, who has a cheek which readily receives blows and a head which easily yields to all kinds of humiliation and who does not have an eye to distinguish between what can be honourably borne and what should be resented at. Utterly ignorant fools like yourself pity villains like my father, when they are punished even before they can accomplish their wicked purposes, such as my father contemplated in bringing the French army down upon us. How is it that you have as yet made no preparation for meeting these foes ? The French armed forces are spreading their banner in our land, not resounding with alarums and excursions, concomitant to warlike preparations. With plumed helmet, your state is already threatening your rule, while you like a simpleton, confined merely to moralizing, sit, giving out shrieks, "Alas ! whyfore should he invade us ?"

Alb. First look to yourself, devil ! Deformity, appropriate to the devil, seems more horrible, when it belongs to woman merely because of inappropriateness in her case.

Gon. O vainglorious simpleton !

Alb. O you, whose genuine fiendish self is concealed by a woman's shape, if you have any sense of shame, do not make your outward appearance look like that of a monster. If it were proper for me to let my hands act in response to the impulse, they are well enough inclined to rend you in pieces ;

A woman's shape doth shield thee.

Gon. Marry, your manhood—mew !

Enter a Messenger.

Alb. What news ?

Mess. O ! my good Lord, the Duke of Cornwall's dead ;
Slain by his servant, going to put out
The other eye of Gloucester.

Alb. Gloucester's eyes !

Mess. A servant that he bred, thrill'd with remorse,
Oppos'd against the act, bending his sword
To his great master ; who thereat enrag'd,
Flew on him, and amongst them fell'd him dead,
But not without that harmful stroke, which since
Hath pluck'd him after.

Alb. This shows you are above,
You justicers, that these our nether crimes
So speedily can venge ! But, O poor Gloucester !
Lost he his other eye ?

Mess. Both, both, my lord.
This letter, Madam, craves a speedy answer ;
'Tis from your sister. [*Presents a letter.*

Gon. [*Aside.*] One way I like this well ;
But being widow, and my Gloucester with her,
May all the building in my fancy pluck
Upon my hateful life : another way,
The news is not so tart. [*Aloud.*] I'll read, and answer.
[*Exit.*

but fiend as you are by your very nature, you are protected from all injuries at my hands by bearing the form of a woman.

Gon. By Mary, if all that is troubling you is the distinction of sex, put off your cloak of manhood, and I shall be happy to meet you on equal terms.

Enter a Messenger.

Alb. What news have you brought ?

Mess. O ! my good Lord, it is a shocking news. The Duke of Cornwall is dead, he has been killed by his servant while going to put the other eye of Gloucester.

Alb. What ! Glouscester's eyes, put out ?

Mess. A servant that he brought up in his household, excited to pity, strongly opposed Cornwall's act of blinding Gloucester, drawing his sword and holding it pointed towards his great master, who rushed furiously upon and in the midst of them, struck him dead, but not without his receiving that stroke which actually brought him to collapse.

Alb. This fact, that you can so speedily avenge crimes, committed here below on the earth, shows that you judges are above and vigilantly see the deeds of men. But alas ! poor Gloucester, did he also lose his other eye ?

Mess. My Lord, he, as ill-luck would have it, lost both his eyes. This letter, Madam, sent by your sister is awaiting a prompt reply to it. [*Presents a letter.*

Gon. [*Aside.*] In so far as his death assists in my project of becoming the Queen of England, the news is pretty good, but the fact that Regan now is a widow with the prospect of grabbing up as her husband, my beloved Gloucester, threatens me to pull dow my ambitiously built up castles and thereby make my own life altogether repugnant to me. There is another way out, as Cornwall has vanished from the scene. On the whole the news is not so unpleasant to taste. [*Aloud*] I will read over the letter and reply to it.

[*Exit.*

Alb. Where was his son, when they did take his eyes ?
Mess. Come with my lady hither.
Alb. He is not here.
Mess. No, my good Lord ; I met him back again.
Alb. Knows he the wickedness ?
Mess. Ay, my good Lord ; 't was he inform'd against him,
And quit the house on purpose that their punishment
Might have the freer course.
Alb. Gloucester, I live
To thank thee for the love thou show'st the king,
And to revenge thine eyes. Come hither, friend :
Tell me what more thou know'st. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—[*The French camp near Dover.*]

Enter KENT, *and a* Gentleman.

Kent. Why the King of France is so suddenly gone back, know you no reason ?

Gent. Something he left imperfect in the state which since his coming forth is thought of ; which imports to the kingdom so much fear and danger that his personal return was most requir'd and necessary.

Kent. Who hath he left behind him general ?

Gent. The Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far.

Kent. Did your letters pierce the Queen to any demonstration of grief ?

Gent. Ay, sir ; she took them, read them in my presence ;
And now and then an ample tear trill'd down
Her delicate cheek ; it seem'd she was a queen,
Over her passion ; who most rebel-like,
Sought to be king o'er her.

Alb. Where was Gloucester's son, when his eyes were being plucked out ?

Mess. He had come over here with my Lady.

Alb. But strangely so, he is not here.

Mess. No, my good Lord, I met him, while he was returning.

Alb. But is he aware of this iniquity ?

Mess. Yes, he is, my good Lord. Moreover, it was in fact he himself, who informed the Duke against his father, whom he exposed as a traitor, and left the house with an objective, that their punishment might have altogether an unrestricted course.

Alb. Gloucester, my object of living now shall be to thank you for your love you have shown for the King, assuring you that this horrible act shall be avenged. Come, this way, friend and tell me in greater details, all you know about these sordid affairs. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—[*The French camp near Dover.*]

Enter KENT, *and a* Gentleman.

Kent. Do you know the reason as to why the King of France so suddenly departed ?

Gent. Some business of state had been left incomplete which, since his arrival here, could be little attended and this incompleteness involves so much cause of fear and so much danger that his personal return was deemed as quite essential and inevitable.

Kent. Whom has he left behind, as his general, to command the troops ?

Gent. He has left the Marshal of France, Monsieur La Far, as his general.

Kent. Did the letter, you delivered to her, thrilled the Queen to any expression of grief ?

Gent. Yes, sir ; she took the letter and read it in my presence and now and then, she broke into tears trickling down her lovely cheeks. It seemed she was able to control her grief, which most rebelliously wanted to overpower her.

Kent. O! then it mov'd her.
Kent. Not to a rage; patience and sorrow strove
Who should express her goodliest. You have seen
Sunshine and rain at once; her smile and tears
Were like, a better way; those happy smilets
That play'd on her ripe lip seem'd not to know
What guests were in her eyes; which parted thence,
As pearls from diamonds dropp'd. In brief,
Sorrow would be a rarity most belov'd,
If all could so become it.
Kent. Made she no verbal question?
Gent. Faith, once or twice she heav'd the name of "father"
Pantingly forth as if it press'd her heart;
Cried, "Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! Sisters!
Kent! father! sisters! what? i' th' storm! i' th' night?
Let pity not be believ'd!" There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes:
And clamour moisten'd, then away she started
To deal with grief alone.
Kent. It is the stars,
The stars above us, govern our conditions;
Else one self mate and make could not beget
Such different issues. You spoke not with her since?
Gent. No.
Kent. Was this before the King return'd?
Gent. No, since.
Kent. Well, sir, the poor distressed Lear's i' th' town;
Who sometime, in his better tune, remembers
What we are come about, and by no means
Will yield to see his daughter.

Kent. O ! then the letter could move her utmost.

Gent. Yes, it moved her, but not beyond the limits ; calmness and grief vied with each other as to which should lend her the greater charm. You should have seen sunshine and rain together ; her smiles and tears were like the combined sunshine and rain only in a better, more beautiful manner because the smiles were not married by the tears, as ths sunshine by the rain. These happy tiny smiles, the tokens of her gladness, that frolicsomely played on her lip red like a cherry, seemed quite unconscious of what guests were there in his eyes, and these guests, the tears bade farewell to her eyes, like the pearls dropping from diamonds. In substance, if all persons had in them sorrow to make it look so beautiful, sorrow would be a thing of rare excellence, something most beloved.

Kent. Did she say anything besides what you could gather from her tears ?

Gent. In faith, once or twice she uttered the name "father" ; excited by quickness of breathing, as if something persistently pressed her heart, she shrieked, 'Sisters ! sisters ! blots in the name of womankind ! sisters ! Kent ! father ! sisters! what ? in the furious storm ! in the wild night ! Let nobody believe in the existence of pity." At that point she broke forth into consecrated tears, gushing out from her heavenly eyes, wet with wailing. She drowned her outcries in a flood of tears, then she moved thence so as to bear and conquer her grief in privacy.

Kent. It is the influence of the stars, of the planets above us, that determines our dispositions, otherwise why should the same husband and the same wife beget children, so much more different from themselves! Did you not speak to her since then ?

Gent. No, I did not speak to her.

Kent. Could you not avail any such opportunity before the King returned ?

Gent. No, I could not do so only since his departure.

Kent. Well, sir, the poor troubled Lear is in the town, and he sometimes, when he is in his lucid intervals, remembers the purpose of our going to him, but by no means would give way to our entreaties that he should see his daughter.

Gent. Why, good, sir?

Kent. A sovereign shame so elbows him; his own unkindness,
That stripp'd her from his benediction, turn'd her
To foreign casualties, gave her dear rights
To his dog-hearted daughters, these things sting
His mind so venomously that burning shame
Detains him from Cordelia.

Gent. Alack! poor gentleman.

Kent. Of Albany's and Cornwall's powers you heard not?

Gent. 'Tis so, they are afoot.

Kent. Well, sir, I'll bring you to our master Lear,
And leave you to attend him. Some dear cause
Will in concealment wrap me up awhile;
When I am known aright, you shall not grieve
Lending me this acquaintance. I pray you,
Go along with me.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—[*The Same.*]

Enter with drum and colours, CORDELIA, DOCTOR, *and* Soldiers.

Cor. Alack! 'tis he: why, he was met even now
As mad as the vex'd sea; singing aloud;
Crown'd with rank fumiter and furrow weeds,
With hardocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flow'rs,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn. A century send forth;
Search every acre in the high-grown field,
And bring him to our eye

[*Exit an Officer.*

Gent. Be good enough to tell me, sir, whyfore does he hesitate in seeing his daughter?

Kent. An overmastering shame so stands at his elbow and reminds of the past, that it was due to his own cruelty, that unjustifiably deprived her of his blessings and turned her out to the mischance in a foreign country; and gave all those precious rights, to which she wes entitled, to his merciless daughters. The compunction of all these things sting his mind so poisonously that an extremely singing shame keeps him distant from his dear daughter, Cordelia.

Gent. Alas! that things should thus happen! poor gentleman, it is a pitiable plight.

Kent. Have you not heard about the position of Albany and Cornwall's armed forces?

Gent. It is as has been reported, they are on the march.

Kent. Well, sir, I will conduct you to our master Lear, and leave you there to attend on him. A reason of great significance, at the moment, will oblige me to remain for a time in concealment. When it is known, what truly I am, you shall not feel sorry for having been acquainted with me. I implore you to accompany me. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—[*The Same.*]

Enter with drum and colours, CORDELIA, DOCTOR, *and* Soldiers.

Cor. Alas! It is he: why, only a short time ago he was seen wandering about, raging like the sea in a storm. He was singing loudly, crowned with luxuriant fumitory and furrow weeds, with hardocks, hemlock, nettles, ladies' smocks, darnel and all the unprofitable weeds that grow in our nourishing corn. Send forth a company of a hundred, search every nook and corner of these elevated fertile fields and bring the King for whose sight our eyes are thirsty.

[*Exit an Officer.*

What can man's wisdom
In the restoring his bereaved sense ?
He that helps him, take all my outward worth.

Doct. There is means, Madam ;
Our foster-nurse of nature is repose,
The which he lacks ; that to provoke in him,
Are many simples operative, whose power
Will close the eye of anguish.

Cor. All bless'd secrets,
All you, unpublish'd virtues of the earth,
Spring with my tears ; be aidant and remediate
In the good man's distress ! Seek, seek for him,
Lest his ungovern'd rage dissolve the life
That wants the means to lead it.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. News, Madam ;
The British powers are marching hitherward.

Cor. 'Tis known before ; our preparation stands
In expectation of them. O dear father !
It is thy business that I go about ;
Therefore great France
My mourning and importun'd tears hath pitied.
No blown ambition doth our arms incite
But love, dear love, and our ag'd father's right.
Soon may I hear and see him !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—[*A Room in* GLOUCESTER'S *Castle.*]

Enter REGAN, *and* OSWALD.

Reg. But are brother's powers set forth ?

Osw. Ay, Madam.

Reg. Himself in person there ?

Osw. Madam, with much ado ;
Your sister is the better soldier.

What is in the power of man's wisdom to do in regard to restoring his lost reason ? He that cures him, will be entitled to the entire wealth that I possess.

Doct. There is a remedial measure, Madam. Rest has a great naturally nourishing power, and this very rest he altogether lacks. To impart him rest, there are many quite efficacious medicinal herbs, whose strength will close the sufferer's eyes.

Cor. May all hitherto unknown healing herbs, all undiscovered plants, efficacious in disease be fertilized by these tears I shed and help to cure the good man's agony of mind. Search him out, lest his unbridled fury should put an end to that life, which now is without the guidance of reason.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. There is a news, Madam ; the British armed forces are marching towards this side.

Cor. It is already known to us ; and our forces are arrayed, ready to fight against them. O dear father ! It is your business, that I incessantly move about and for the reason of providing relief and succour to you, great France has pitied my sorrowful and importunate tears, so as to be ready for this exigency. Our forces are motivated, not by ambition, inflated with the pride of conquest, but by love, intimate affection for our old reverend father, whose lost rights should be regained. May I very soon see him and hear him speak !

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—[*A Room in* GLOUCESTER'S *Castle.*]

Enter REGAN, *and* OSWALD.

Reg. Are my Lord Albany's forces on their march, prepared for the battle ?

Osw. Yes, Madam, they are.

Reg. Is he himself there with them ?

Osw. Yes, he is there, but could be pleased to do so, only after much fuss and persuasion. For that reason, your sister is a soldier, so much more spirited.

Reg. Lord Edmund spake not with your Lord at home?

Osw. No, Madam.

Reg. What might import sister's letter to him?

Osw. I know not, Lady.

Reg. Faith, he is posted hence on serious matter.
It was great ignorance, Gloucester's eyes being out,
To let him live; where he arrive he moves
All hearts against us. Edmund, I think, is gone
In pity of his misery, to dispatch
His nighted life; moreover, to descry
The strength o' th' enemy.

Osw. I must needs after him, Madam, with my letter.

Reg. Our troops set forth to-morrow: stay with us;
The way are dangerous.

Osw. I may not, Madam;
My Lady charg'd my duty in this business.

Reg. Why should she write to Edmund? Might not you
Transport her purposes by word? Belike,
Some things—I know not what. I'll love thee much—
Let me unseal the letter.

Osw. Madam, I had rather—

Reg. I know your Lady does not love her husband;
I am sure of that: and at her late being here
She gave strange oeillads and most speaking looks
To noble Edmund. I know you are of her bosom.

Reg. Is it true that Lord Edmund, who accompanied my sister home, never spoke with her husband ?

Osw. No, Madam, he did not speak to her husband.

Reg. What can be the purport of my sister's letter, that she wrote to Edmund ?

Osw. I myself don't know anything in that regard, Lady.

Reg. To tell you the truth, he is commissioned hence on an important business. It was extremely unwise, Gloucester's eyes having been put out, to allow him to remain alive, so that now wherever he goes, he invites the passions of the people against us. Edmund, as I think, has gone to put him out of the misery of his darkened life, being so very compassionate with his blindness. Besides he wants to ascertain the strength of the enemies.

Osw. I must, even out of necessity, follow him, Madam, with my letter.

Reg. Our forces march ahead tomorrow ; meanwhile you can stay with us, as the routes are risky enough.

Osw. I am not in a position to stay over here, Madam. My Lord laid it upon me as an urgent duty to convey this letter and hence no delay.

Reg. Whyfore, after all, should she write to Edmund ? Shall you be good enough to communicate to me her objects by word of mouth. Presumably some things......of which I am least aware. Let me open the letter and acquaint myself with the contents thereof ; I would, on that account, give you sufficient proofs of my greater regard for you.

Osw. Madam, it would be rather difficult for me to do.

Reg. I know it pretty well, your lady has no affection and regard for her husband. I am sure of that ; and while she was here, quite recently, she cast amorous glances, eloquent of her surreptitious love for noble Edmund. I know you are in her confidence.

Osw. I, Madam ?

Reg. I speak in understanding ; y'are, I know't :
Therefore I do advise you, take this note :
My Lord is dead ; Edmund and I have talk'd
And more convenient is he for my hand
Than for your Lady's. You may gather more.
If you do find him, pray you give him this,
And when your mistress hears thus much from you,
I pray desire her call her wisdom to her ;
So, fare you well.
If you do chance to hear of that blind traitor,
Preferment falls on him that cuts him off.

Osw. Would I could meet him, Madam : I should show
What party I do follow.

Reg. Fare thee well. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—[*The country near Dover.*]

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* EDGAR *dressed like a peasant.*

Glou. When shall I come to th' top of that same hill ?

Edg. You do climb it now ; look how we labour.

Glou. Methinks the ground is even.

Edg. Horrible steep ;
Hark ! do you hear the sea ?

Glou. No, truly.

Edg. Why, then your other senses grow imperfect
By your eyes' anguish.

Glou. So may it be, indeed.
Methinks thy voice is alter'd and thou speak'st
In better phrase and matter than thou didst.

Osw. What, am I in her confidence, Madam ?

Reg. I have good ground for my belief ; you are in her confidence and I know it for certain and consequently, I do advise you rightly, take a serious note of whatever I speak to you. My Lord is dead; Edmund and I have come to an understanding on the matter and he is decidedly more fitting to be my husband than for your Lady's, in the context of the situation. You may deduce more from my hints. If you do see him, give him this and make him fully acquainted with all this and when your mistress listens to what I have hitherto spoken to you, I trust you will urge her to summon up all her wisdom and abandon all hope of marrying Lord Edmund. So, may you fare well. If you happen to come across that blind traitor, Gloucester, anyone who puts an end to his life, may be handsomely rewarded by me for the deed.

Osw. I wish I could meet him, Madam, and when I meet him, I will show him on which side I am.

Reg. May you fare well. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—[*The country near Dover.*]

Enter GLOUCESTER, *and* EDGAR *dressed like a peasant.*

Glou. When shall I come to the edge of the same cliff, about which you referred earlier to me ?

Edg. Now you do begin to climb it up ; don't you feel how tiresome the ascent is !

Glou. The ground seems to me on level.

Edg. No, it is horribly steep. Listen ! Do you hear the roaring of the sea ?

Glou. No, in truth, I don't hear it.

Edg. Then it must be that the loss of your eyes has also impaired your other senses.

Glou. It may be indeed as you say. It seems to me that your voice is a little changed and you begin to speak in better language and more coherently than earlier you did.

Edg. You 're much deceiv'd ; in nothing am I chang'd
But in my garments.

Glou. Methinks you're better spoken.

Edg. Come on, sir ; here's the place : stand still. How fearful
And dizzy 'tis to cast one's eyes so low !
The crows and chaughs that wing the midway air
Show scarce so gross as beetles ; half way down,
Hangs one that gathers sampire, dreadful trade !
Methinks he seems no bigger than his head.
The fishermen that walk upon the beach
Appear like mice, and yond tall anchoring bark
Diminish'd to her cock, her cock a buoy
Almost too small for sight. The murmuring surge,
That on th' unnumber'd idle pebble chafes.
Cannot be heard so high. I'll look no more,
Lest my brain turn, and the deficient sight
Topple down headlong.

Glou. Set me where you stand.

Edg. Give me your hand ; you are now within a foot
Of th' extreme verge : for all beneath the moon
Would I not leap upright.

Glou. Let go my hand.
Here, friend, 's another purse ; in it a jewel
Well worth a poor man's taking : fairies and gods
Prosper it with thee ! Go thou further off ;
Bid me farewell, and let me hear thee going.

Edg. Now fare ye well, good sir,

Glou. With all my heart.

Edg. [*Aside.*] Why I do trifle thus with his despair
Is done to cure it.

Glou. [*Kneeling.*] O you mighty gods !
This world I do renounce, and in your sights
Shake patiently my great affliction off ;
If I could bear it longer, and not fall
To quarrel with your great opposeless wills,
My snuff and loathed part of nature should
Burn itself out. If Edgar live, O, bless him !
Now, fellow, fare thee well.

Edg. You are much deluded. I am changed in nothing except in my garments.

Glou. It, however, seems to me that you speak with better accent, propriety and grace.

Edger. Come on, sir ; here is our stipulated place. Stand still, how horrifying and dizzy it makes one feel to cast one's eyes so deep down. The crows and jackdaws that fly along the midway air, appear hardly as big as beetles. Half way down hangs by rope, several fathom from the top of the impending rocks, a person to gather samphire, horrible business, as it is ! I think he seems not bigger than his head. The fishermen, walking upon the beach, appear as small as mice, and a little beyond, large vessel at anchor, looks no larger than her cock-boat and the cock-boat looks no bigger than buoy, almost too small to visualize at. The murmuring innumerable unprofitable pebbles cannot be heard from a tremendous height, such as this. I will look no more, lest my brain should turn, and I becoming giddy, be hurled headlong down the cliff.

Glou. Set me at the space, where you stand at the moment.

Edg. Give me your hand ; you are now within a foot's distance from that extreme edge of the cliff. Even, for getting all that exists under the moon, I would not leap in the air.

Glou. Let my hand be released. Here is another purse for you, friend, which contains a jewel, precious enough to be taken by a poor man. May fairies and gods make it bring luck to you ! You may go further hence and bid me farewell ; and let me make sure by hearing that you move hence.

Edg. Now, may you farewell, good sir.

Glou. With all my heart, I wish you best of luck.

Edg. [*Aside*.] Why I am thus trifling with his extreme agony, it is obviously to cure him of it.

Glou. [*Kneeling*] O you omnipotent gods, I bid to abandon this world once for all and in your presence patiently shake my terrific agony so as to get rid of it. If I could endure it long and without falling into the worse sin of being sceptical in regard to the justice of your irresistible divine wills, I should leave this contemptible part of myself, my shrivelled and decrepit body to burn itself, so as to be reduced to ashes. If Edgar happens to live, may he be blessed by benign gods. Now, fellow, may you farewell.

Edg. Gone, sir: farewell.

[GLOUCESTER *throws himself forward and falls.*

And yet I know not how conceit may rob
The treasury of life when life itself
Yields to the theft; had he been where he thought,
By this had thought been past. Alive or dead?
Ho, you sir! friend! Hear you, sir! speak!
Thus might he pass indeed; yet he revives.
What are you, sir?

Glou. Away, and let me die.

Edg. Hadst thou been aught but gossamer, feathers, air,
So many fathom down precipitating
Thou'dst shiver'd like an egg; but thou dost breathe,
Hast heavy substance, bleed'st not, speak'st, art sound.
Ten masts at each make not the altitude
Which thou hast perpendicularly fell:
Thy life's a miracle. Speak yet again.

Glou. But have I fall'n, or no?

Edg. From the dread summit of this chalky bourn,
Look up a-height; the shrill gorg'd lark so far
Cannot be seen or heard: do but look up.

Glou. Alack! I have no eyes.
Is wretchedness depriv'd that benefit
To end itself by death? 'Twas yet some comfort,
When misery could beguile the tyrant's rage,
And frustrate his proud will.

Edg. Give me your arm:
Up—so; how is 't? Feel you your legs? you stand.

Glou. Too well, too well.

Edg. This is above all strangeness.
Upon the crown o' th' cliff what thing was that
Which parted from you.

Glou. A poor unfortunate beggar.

Edg. I have left you, sir, farewell.

[GLOUCESTER *throws himself forward and falls.*

And yet perhaps I ought not to pretend to leave him, for I know not how it is, nonetheless it is a fact that the imagination or illusion, that he has fallen from the top of the cliff, is enough for killing him that way, especially when he is so very anxious to die. If he had been where he thought of, by this time, the thought that he is dead, would have been brought to an end. Is he alive or dead ? Ho! you sir ! friend ! do you listen to me, sir ! Speak ! Thus he might die in reality ; nevertheless he comes back to life. How are you, sir ?

Glou. Be away and let me die peacefully.

Edg. Had you been anything such as the flimsy threads of the spider's web, feathers in the air,-so many fathom deep down falling headlong, you would have been blown into small pieces like those of an egg ; but you fortunately so breathe as you are a substantial body, you do not bleed, you speak and are sound. The top of the cliff, wherefrom you have perpendicularly fallen cannot be arrived at even by ten masts fastened one on top of another. It is indeed a miracle that you live. Speak something again you heart's desire.

Glou. But tell me whether I have fallen or not ?

Edg. You have fallen from the dreadful peak of the chalky cliff. Look on high ; the shrill-throated lark from so far can neither be seen nor heard : do look upwards.

Glou. Alas ! My eyes are devoid of their sight. Are the wretched not even allowed to get rid of their wretchedness by death ? There was still some comfort left in the world, when a miserable man could by suicide cheat the tyrant and defeat his stern purpose.

Edg. Give me your arm. Come up : like that, how is it that you feel ? Can you use your legs ? Here do you stand.

Glou. I can use my legs well and stand easily.

Edg. This is not merely strange, but something miraculous. Who it was that took leave from you on the edge of the cliff ?

Glou. It was a poor, unfortunate beggar.

Edg. As I stood here below methought his eye
Were two full moons; he had a thousand noses,
Horns whelk'd and wav'd like the enridged sea:
It was some fiend; therefore, thou happy father,
Think that the clearest gods, who make them honours
Of men's impossibilities, have preserved thee.

Glou. I do remember now; henceforth I'll bear
Affliction till it do cry out itself
"Enough, enough," and die. That thing you speak of
I took it for a man; often't would say
"The Fiend, the Fiend": he led me to that place.

Edg. Bear free and patient thoughts. But who comes here?

Enter LEAR *fantastically dressed with flowers.*

The safer sense will ne'er accommodate
His master thus.

Lear. No, they cannot touch me for coining; I am the king himself.

Edg. O thou side-piercing sight!

Lear. Nature's above art in that respect. There's your prest money. That fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper: draw me a clothier's yard. Look, look! a mouse. Peace, peace! this piece of toasted cheese will do't. There's my gauntlet; I'll prove it on a giant. Bring up the brown bills. O! well flown bird; i' th' clout, i' th' clout: hewgh! Give the word.

Edg. Sweet marjoram.

Lear. Pass.

Glou. I know that voice.

Edg. As I stood here below, it seemed to me that his eyes were two full moons and he had a thousand noses, and horns twisted and curled like the crested waves of the sea. It was some fiend ; therefore you, fortunate father, think that the most open and most righteous gods, who derive to themselves honour and reverence from men by doing things which they consider to be impossible, have protected your life.

Glou. I have now come to my senses and recollect ; henceforth I will bear this agony till it becomes weary and gives the signal for release : "Enough , enough," and die. That thing, about which you referred—I took for a man, who would frequently utter, "The Fiend, the Fiend" : he himself conducted me to that edge of cliff.

Edg. Let your thoughts be altogether free from the anxieties and encumbrances. But who comes here presently?

Enter LEAR, *fantastically dressed with wild flowers.*

A man in the perfect possession of his senses would not get himself up in this grotesque garb.

Lear. No, they cannot punish me for coining, that being the royal prerogative, as I am the king himself.

Edg. O, what a heart-rending scene is that you produce !

Lear. A born king can never lose his natural rights. There is your earnest money. That fellow handles his bow, not like a sportsman but like a scarecrow. Draw for me an arrow, a cloth-yard long. Look, look ! here is a mouse. Be calm ; be at peace ! this piece of toasted cheese will be enough to settle the bargain, and he would be caught. I throw down my gauntlet ; I am ready to fight on this cause with a giant. Bring up the troops armed with brown bills. O ! well flown bird; in the centre of the target ; the mark shot at. The arrow goes whizzing ! Give the password.

Edg. Sweet morjoram to cure the brain's ailment.

Lear. Pass it on.

Glou. That voice strikes familiar to me.

Lear. Ha ! Goneril, with a white beard ! They flattered me like a dog, and told me I had the white hairs in my beard ere the black ones were there. To say "ay" and "no" to everything that I said ! "Ay" and "no" too was no good divinity. When the rain came to wet me once and the wind to make me chatter, when the thunder would not peace at my bidding, there I found 'em, there I smelt 'em out. Go to, they are not men o' their words : they told me I was everything ; 'tis a lie, I am not ague-proof.

Glou. The trick of that voice I do well remember ;
Is't not the King ?

Lear. Ay, every inch a king :
When I do stare, see how the subject quakes.
I pardon that man's life. What was thy cause ?
Adultery ?
Thou shalt not die : for adultery ! no :
The wren goes to 't, and the small gilded fly
Does lecher in my sight.
Let copulation thrive ; for Gloucester's bastard son
Was kinder to his father than my daughters
Got 'tween the lawful sheets. To't, luxury, pell-mell !
For I lack soldiers. Behold yond simp'ring dame,
Whose face between her forks presages snow ;
That minces virtue, and does shake the head
To hear of pleasure's name—
The fitchew nor the soiled horse goes to't
With more riotous appetite.
Down from the waist they are centaurs,
Though woman all above :
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,
Beneath is all the fiend's: there's hell, there's darkness,
There is the sulphurous pit—burning, scalding,
Stench, consumption ; fie, fie, fie ! pah, pah !
Give me an ounce of civet, good apothecary,
To sweeten my imagination:
There's money for thee.

Lear. Ha ! Goneril with a white beard ! They fawned upon me like a dog and told me I had the wisdom of age, before I was old enough to grow a beard. What contemptible fellows were those wheedling courtiers of mine to agree with my vagaries of the mood, whether I was right or wrong! 'Yes' and 'no'—that was a poor theology, for showing their belief in me. When the rain came to drench me once and the wind do make me chatter, when the thunder would not be still at my command, there I found them and scented their duplicity. Willy-nilly they are scarcely reliable. They told me I was the supreme lord ; but that is altogether false ; I am not proof to shivering and hence the quaking.

Glou. That is the peculiarity of his voice which I remember pretty well. Is he not the King ?

Lear. Yes I am a king in every respect. When I look angry, see how terror-stricken are my subjects! I pardon that man's life. What was your offence ? Was it adultery ? You shall not be condemned to death : what, death for adultery ! absolutely not. The wren is a victim to it, and the small gilded fly drowns in lust, which I have seen and everybody may see. Let this sort of mating flourish, as Gloucester's illegitimate son was more generous to his father than what my legitimate daughters were to me. Getting between the lawful sheets ; and the lust forces one to it, promiscuously. I am wanting in soldiers. Look in the front a dame, smiling in a silly manner, and whose face between her forks seems to be frigidly chaste and affects the coy timidity of virtue. She shakes her head in the very name of pleasure. Neither the pole-cat, nor the wantonly pampered horse, goes to lewdness more ravenously than she. They are fabulous centaurs down from the waist, though women from all above it. The gods hold their sway on their upper parts, but the lower parts, from the girdle, are made by the devil and there it is all chaos, and anarchy, and darkness of the under-world ; there it is the sulphurous pit—burning, singeing in the hot liquid, stinking, consumptive : fie, fie, fie ! pooh, pooh ! Give me but an ounce of the perfume of the civet cat, good druggist, to make my imagination mellifluous. There is money for your labours.

Glou. O ! let me kiss that hand.

Lear. Let me wipe it first ; it smells of mortality.

Glou. O ruin'd piece of Nature ! This great world
Shall so wear out to naught. Dost thou know me ?

Lear. I remember thine eyes well enough. Dost thou squiny at me ?
No, do thy worst, blind Cupid; I'll not love.
Read thou this challenge ; mark but the penning of it.

Glou. Were all thy letters suns, I could not see one.

Edg. [*Aside.*] I would not take this from report ; it is,
And my heart breaks at it.

Lear. Read.

Glou. What ! with the case of eyes ?

Lear. O, ho ! are you there with me ? No eyes in your head, nor no money in your purse ? Your eyes are in a heavy case, your purse in a light ; yet you see how this world goes.

Glou. I see it feelingly.

Lear. What ! art mad ? A man may see how this world goes with no eyes. Look with thine ears : see how yond justice rails upon yond simple thief. Hark, in thine ear : change places, and, handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief ? Thou hast seen a farmer's dog bark at a beggar ?

Glou. Ay, sir.

Glou. O ! let me kiss that hand of yours.

Lear. Let me purge it first, because it smacks of humanity, that is so rotten at the bottom.

Glou. O remnant of that which nature once made in such an excellent form ! This vast universe shall so decay and lose its primal glory, as be reduced to nothingness. Do you know me ?

Lear. I remember your eyes pretty well, but whyfore do you look askance ? No, may you try all your artifices upon me, but they will produce hardly any tangible effect and consequently you would not be able to make me fall in love. Do you but read this challenge ; mark how characteristically it is penned.

Glou. Even if all your letters were suns, I could not have a look at them.

Edg. [*Aside.*] If I had been told that Lear had fallen into such a wretched plight, I would not have believed it, but it is, as such, a glaring fact and the very contemplation of which breaks my heart.

Lear. Read over the letter.

Glou. What ! Do you expect me to read merely with the sockets of my eyes.

Lear. O, ho ! Is that what you mean ? Do you neither have eyes in your head, nor money in your purse ? Why, your eyes are in heavy sockets, while your purse in an empty one, none the less you discern how strange are the ways of the world.

Glou. I, being devoid of the sight, perceive it by the sense of touch.

Lear. What ! are you mad and think the world can only be seen with the eyes, that you speak of feeling it, as though that were a poor test of perception? Why, you can look very well with your ears ; and ascertain how the inaccessible justice invades the distant thief of low-birth. Listen, in your ears. Let them change places, and you would not be able to distinguish one from the other, as to which one is justice and which one thief. Have you seen a farmer's dog barking at a beggar ?

Glou. Yes, sir, I have seen.

Lear. And the creature run from the cur? There thou might'st behold
The great image of authority:
A dog's obey'd in office.
Thou, rascal beadle, hold thy bloody hand!
Why dost thou lash that whore? Strip thine own back;
Thou hotly lusts to use her in that kind
For which thou whipp'st her. The usurer hangs the cozener.
Through tatter'd clothes small vices do appear;
Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw does pierce it.
None does offend, none, I say, none; I'll able 'em;
Take that of me, my friend, who have the power
To seal th' accuser's lips. Get thee glass eyes;
And, like a scurvy politician, seem
To see the things thou dost not. Now, now, now, now;
Pull off my boots; harder, harder; so.

Edg. [*Aside*.] O! matter and impertinency mix'd;
Reason in madness.

Lear. If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes;
I know thee well enough; thy name is Gloucester;
Thou must be patient; we came crying hither:
Thou know'st the first time that we smell the air
We wawl and cry. I will preach to thee: mark.

Glou. Alack, alack the day!

Lear. When we are born, we cry that we are come
To this great stage of fools. This a food block!
It were a delicate stratagem to shoe
A troop of horse with felt; I'll pu 't in proof,
And when I have stol'n upon these son-in-laws,
Then, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill, kill!

Lear. And have you seen a human being running frightened from the dog ? There you might see that image in which the idea of great authority is embodied, and as such anything in official position is obeyed. You scoundrel, parish constable, check your bloody hand ! Whyfore do you whip that strumpet ? Better strip your own back for that. You passionately lecherous in using her in that manner, for which you strike her with whips ! The magistrate who has been guilty of the crime of usury passes sentence on one, guilty only of petty swindling. In beggars, vices, however small, are easily noticed ; in rich people, vices, however great, go unseen. Robes and gowns, trimmed with ermine conceal all the drawbacks. Clothe sin in the plate armour of wealth, and the stroke of justice, however powerful, recoils harmlessly from it, the only injury being done to itself. Let the sin be clothed in rags, even a trivial straw will pierce it. Nobody offends, none, none that is what I say I will take off all the legal disabilities, which they may have incurred by their crimes. Take that piece of information from me, my friend ; who are empowered to stop the oppressors from accusing. Get a pair of glass eyes for you and like a contemptible politician, pretend to see those things which are actually invisible to you. Now, now, now, now, pull off my boots instantly. How hard, and harder still are they. So pull them out.

Edg. [*Aside*.] O ! sense and nonsense mingled in him and reason reflects itself through insanity.

Lear. If you are desirous of weeping for my fortunes, take my eyes for that. I know you pretty well ; your name is Gloucester. You must have patience. We came crying to this world at our birth. You know the first time that we taste the life, we cry aloud and shriek. I will preach to you : be attentive for that.

Glou. Alas, alas it is day : but where is the day for me!

Lear. When we are born, we give out shrieks announcing our arrival to this world, which is but a great stage of fools, where we too have to play our parts. This is a good shape of hat. It were an ingenious trick to let the horses be shod with flocks to prevent sliding as well as noise. I will try the experiment myself, and when I have surreptitiously caught hold of these sons-in-law, then no quarter is to be left for the foes, and kill, kill, kill, kill, kill kill !

Enter a Gentleman, *with* Attendants.

Gent. O! here he is; lay hand upon him.—Sir,
Your most dear daughter—

Lear. No rescue? What! a prisoner? I am even
The natural fool of Fortune. Use me well;
You shall have ransom. Let me have surgeons;
I am cut to th' brains.

Gent. You shall have anything.

Lear. No seconds? All myself?
Why this would make a man a man of salt,
To use his eyes for garden water-pots,
Ay, and laying autumn's dust. I will die bravely
Like a smug bridegroom. What! I will be jovial:
Come, come; I am a king, masters, know you that?

Gent. You are a royal one, and we obey you.

Lear. Then there's life in't. Come and you get it,
You shall get it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.

[*Exit running*, Attendants *follow*.

Gent. A sight most pitiful in the meanest wretch,
Past speaking of in a king! Thou hast one daughter,
Who redeems nature from the general curse
Which twain have brought her to.

Edg. Nail, gentle sir!

Gent. Sir, speed you; what's your will?

Edg. Do you hear aught, sir, of a battle towards?

Gent. Most sure and vulgar; every one hears that,
Which can distinguish sound.

Edg. But, by your favour,
How near's the other army?

Gent. Near, and on speedy foot; the main descry
Stands on the hourly thought.

Edg. I thank you, sir: that's all.

Gent. Though that the Queen on special cause is here,
Her army is mov'd on.

Enter a Gentleman, *with* Attendants.

Gent. O ! here he is seen ; seize him ; sir, your most dear daughter wants—

Lear. Does no one come to my rescue ? What I am taken as a prisoner, and is there none stirred to save me ? Treat me well and I am quite ready to pay ransom for my liberty. Let surgeons come to my assistance, I am wounded in the brains.

Gent. You shall have anything that you ask.

Lear. Will no one help me ? Am I to be left all alone, without any hope for succour ? Why, this would rather make a man a man of tears to use him eyes as garden water-pots, yes, and for laying autumn's dust. I will die courageously, like a spick and span bridegroom. What ! I will be drowned in joy. Come, dome ; I am after all a king, fine fellows, aren't you aware of that ?

Gent. You are a royal king, and we are prepared to obey you.

Lear. Then there is still hope. Come and if you succeed in your object, you shall achieve it by running. Sa, sa, sa, sa.
[*Exit running.* Attendants *follow.*

Gent. It is a sight, most pitiable even in the meanest wretch, which in the case of a king, no words can describe ! You have a daughter, who redeems human nature from the curse brought on it by Goneril and Regan.

Edg. Welcome to you, noble sir!

Gent. Sir, make haste : tell me what is your heart's desire ?

Edg. Do you hear anything, sir, in regard to the battle in preparation ?

Gent. That is most certain and is in everybody's mouth. Every one hears that and hence beyond sound there is a grain of truth in this rumour.

Edg. But if you will excuse my asking, how far is the other army from here ?

Gent. It is close to us and advancing rapidly and we expect to descry the main body any hour, now.

Edg. I am grateful to you, sir : that is all I had to ask.

Gent. Even though the Queen is here for the special purpose of taking care of her father, her army is on the march.

Edg. I thank you, Sir.

[*Exit* Gentleman.

Glou. You ever-gentle gods, take my breath from me:
Let not my worst spirit tempt me again
To die before you please!

Edg. Well pray you, father.

Glou. Now, good sir, what are you?

Edg. A most poor man, made tame to Fortune's blows;
Who, by the art of known and feeling sorrows,
Am pregnant to good pity. Give me your hand,
I'll lead you to some biding.

Glou. Hearty thanks:
The bounty and the benison of Heaven
To boot, and boot!

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. A proclaim'd prize! Most happy!
That eyeless head of thine was first fram'd flesh
To raise my fortunes. Thou old unhappy traitor,
Briefly thyself remember. The sword is out
That must destroy thee.

Glou. Now let thy friendly hand
Put strength enough to 't. [EDGAR *interposes*.

Osw. Wherefore, bold peasant,
Dar'st thou support a publish'd traitor? Hence,
Lest that th' infection of his fortune take
Like hold on thee. Let go his arm.

Edg. Chill not let go, zir, without vurther 'casion.

Osw. Let go, slave, or thou di'st.

Edg. Good gentleman, go your gait, and let poor volk pass. An chud ha' bin zwagger'd out of my life, 't would not ha' bin zo long as 'tis by a vortnight. Nay, come not near th' old man; keep out, che vor ye, or Ice try whether your costard or my ballow be the harder. Chill be plain with you.

Edg. I am obliged to you, sir. [*Exit* Gentleman.

Glou. You, ever-benevolent gods, take my life from me: but let my inclination to rebel against your wills not tempt me to die, before you want me to!

Edg. Well pray you father for the divine mercy.

Glou. Now, good fellow, tell me who are you ?

Edg. I am a most poor man, made submissive to the fierce blows of the Fortune and as taught by personal and heartfelt sorrows, I am quick to conceive pity for others. Give me your hand, as I propose to lead you to some place, where you may rest.

Glou. I express my sincere obligation for that. May Heaven send you its good fortune and its blessing in abundance !

Enter OSWALD.

Osw. Here do I find one who has been proclaimed as a traitor and on whose head a price has been set. Most fortunate as I am, that eyeless head of yours was first formed flesh so as to be instrumental for bringing prosperity to me. You old unfortunate traitor, briefly think over the sins of your past life and ask pardon of heaven. My sword is unsheathed and it must instantly put you to death.

Glou. Now let your friendly hand, as I am quite willing to die, be strong enough to despatch me. [EDGAR *interposes.*

Osw. For what reason do you intervene, audacious peasant. How do you dare support the case of a publicly proclaimed traitor? Be off, lest you suffer the same misfortune with him by dying by my sword. Release his arm.

Edg. I will not release, sir, without further occasion, come what may.

Osw. Do you but release him, slave, or you die on the spot.

Edg. Good gentleman, go your own way and let the poor, innocent folk pass. And if I was going to allow myself to be frightened out of my life by mere bluster, it would not have been so long as it is by a fortnight. No, you need not come near the old man ; keep yourself off, I warn you or I shall try which is harder, whether your head or my cudgel. I will be plain with you and hence I mean what I say.

Osw. Out, dunghill !

Edg. Chill pick your teeth, zir. Come ; no matter vor your foins.

[*They fight, and* EDGAR *knocks him down.*

Osw. Slave, thou hast slain me. Villain take my purse ;
If ever thou wilt thrive, bury my body,
And give the letters which thou find'st about me
To Edmund, Earl of Glucester ; seek him out
Upon the English party. O ! untimely death,
Death ! [*Dies.*

Edg. I know thee well : a serviceable villain ;
As duteous to the vices of thy mistress
As badness would desire.

Glou. What ! is he dead ?

Edg. Sit you down, father ; rest you.
Let's see these pockets ; the letters that he speaks of
May be my friends. He's dead : I am only sorry
He had no other death's-man. Let us see:
Leave, gentle wax ; and, manners, blame us not ;
To know our enemies' minds, we'd rip their hearts ;
Their papers is more lawful. [*Reads.*

'Let our reciprocal vows be remembered. You have many opportunities to cut him off ; if your will want not, time and place will be fruitfully offer'd. There is nothing done if he return the conqueror : then am I the prisoner, and his bed my gaol ; from the loathed warmth whereof deliver me, and supply the place for your labour.

Your wife, so I would say—
Affectionate servant,
Goneril.'

O indistinguish'd space of woman's will !
A plot upon her virtuous husband's life ;
And the exchange of my brother ! Here, in the sands
Thee I'll rake up, the post unsanctified
Of murtherous lechers ; and in the mature time
With this ungracious paper strike the sight
Of the death-practis'd Duke. For him 'tis well
That of thy death and business I can tell.

Osw. You be off, dunghill born base fellow !

Edg. I will knock sparks out of you, fellow, come, how do your ineffective thrusts matter to me ?

[*They fight, and* EDGAR *knocks him down.*

Osw. Slave, you have killed me. Villain, take my purse and if ever you will prosper, bury my body and deliver the letter, which you will find on my person, to Edmund, Earl of Gloucester, whom you should search in the ranks of the British army. O ! An untimely death for me, I die. [*Dies.*

Edg. I know you well ; you were an overofficious villain, as obsequious to the vices of your mistress, as any extent of wickedness could possibly desire.

Glou. What ! is he dead ?

Edg. Father, be seated ; and you take rest. Let us find out what these pockets contain : the letter he speaks of, may be of a considerable use to me. He is dead ; I am sorry, he had no other executioner. Let us see, with your permission, and manner would not blame us in that we ascertain what is there in the enemies' minds. We dissect their hearts for that, but to rip up their papers is a less offence. [*Reads.*

'Let our mutually exchanged promises be remembered. You have but many opportunities to cut him off. If you are not lacking in determination, opportunities of time and place will offer themselves abundantly. If the opportunity is not seized of making away with him, while these commotions last, our dreams will be shattered, in consequence of which he will be the conqueror and I a mere prisoner, his bed being a jail, from the very loathsome warmth of which you deliver me, and replace him and thus be rewarded for the troubles you will have taken.

Your wife, so I would say—
Affectionate lover,
Goneril.'

O unmarked, boundless reach of woman's will ! She has plotted against her innocent and virtuous husband's life and my illegitimate brother, whom she hopes to gain in exchange ! Here in the sands, I will bury and cover up the dead body of this most nefarious messenger of a murderous adulteress. And when the time is ripe, I will startle the Duke of Albany with this wicked script that witnesses to the foul play on his own life. For him, it would be beneficial that I am able to give him information of your death and of the business on which you were employed.

Glou. The King is mad : how stiff is my vile sense,
That I stand up, and have ingenious feeling
Of my huge sorrows ! Better I were distract ;
So should my thoughts be sever'd from my griefs,
And woes by wrong imaginations lose—
The knowledge of themselves.

[*Drum afar off.*

Edg. Give me your hand :
Far off, methinks, I hear the beaten drum.
Come, father, I'll bestow you with a friend.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—[*A tent in the* French camp, LEAR *on a bed asleep, soft music playing* ; *Gentleman, and others attending.*]

Enter CORDELIA, KENT *and* DOCTOR.

Cor. O thou good Kent ! how shall I live and work
To match thy goodness ? My life will be too short,
And every measure fail me.

Kent. To be acknowledg'd, Madam, is o'er-paid.
All my reports go with the modest truth,
Nor more nor clipp'd, but so.

Cor. Be better suited :
These weeds are memories of those worser hours :
I prithee, put them off.

Kent. Pardon, dear Madam ;
Yet to be known shortens my made intent :
My boon I make it that you know me not
Till time and I think meet.

Cor. Then be't so, my good Lord. [*To the Doctor.*]
How does the King ?

Doct. Madam, sleeps still.

Glou. The king is mad ; how obstinate and therefore repugnant to me is my reason in that it does not allow me to bow in madness, like the king, under the burden of my terrible woes, but compels me to retain a vivid sense of them. It would have been much better, had I, like the King, gone clean off my mind. So should I lose all the consciousness of my sorrows and thereby be a little relieved and be lost in hallucinations, utterly unaware. [*Drum afar off.*

Edg. Give me your hand. Far off from here, does it seem to me, I hear the drum, being beaten. Come father, I will obtain care and shelter for you at my friend's abode.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VII.—[*A tent in the French camp,* LEAR *on a bed asleep, soft music playing* ; *Gentleman and others attending.*]

Enter CORDELIA, KENT, *and* Doctor.

Cor. O you good Kent! How shall I live and endeavour to adequately compensate your immeasurable goodness ? My life will be but too short a period and any recompense, I shall mete out to you will be merely insufficient in my eyes.

Kent. To have my services acknowledged is for me to be overpaid. In all my reports in regard to the events, since you went to France, nothing is exaggerated, nothing extenuated ; and the bare truth revealed.

Cor. Wear but a better dress. These clothes that you wear are the relics of the much worse times. I implore you take them off.

Kent. I beg to be pardoned, dear Madam ! For me to be recognized at present interferes with my fixed design and hence I ask it as a favour that you appear not to recognize me till the circumstances show me that the proper moment has come for me to reveal myself.

Cor. Then it would be as you desire, my good Lord. [*To the Doctor.*] How is the King now ?

Doct. Madam, he is still asleep.

Cor. O you kind gods,
Cure this great breach in his abused nature !
Th' untuned and jarring senses, O ! wind up
Of this child-changed father.

Doct. So please your Majesty
That we may wake the King ? he hath slept long.

Cor. Be govern'd by your knowledge, and proceed
I' th' sway of your own will. Is he array'd ?

Gent. Ay, Madam, in the heaviness of sleep
We put fresh garments on him.

Doct. Be by, good Madam, when we do awake him ;
I doubt not of his temperance.

Cor. Very well.

Doct. Please you, draw near. Louder the music there.

Cor. O my dear father ! Restoration hang
Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made !

Kent. Kind and dear princess !

Cor. Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Did challenge pity of them. Was this a face
To be oppos'd against the warring winds ?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder ?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick cross lightning? to watch—poor perdu !—
With this thin helm ? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire ; and wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine and rogues forlorn,
In short and musty straw ? Alack, alack !
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.—He wakes ; speak to him ?

Doct. Madam, do you; 'tis fittest.

Cor. O you benevolent gods, cure this great sinus in his nature, he being cruelly treated. The untuned and acrimonious senses, O ! tune up the slack strings of the mind, until they reach the pitch of sanity, in this father, changed by the iniquitous treatment of his children.

Doct. May your Majesty be pleased to give us permission that we may awake the King, as by now he has slept for long.

Cor. I leave it to you to decide as to what should be the proper moment to awake him and in this matter do as your wishes dictate you to. Have you put fresh clothes on him ?

Gent. Yes, Madam, he being heavily asleep, we put fresh clothes on him.

Doct. Be close to him, good madam, when we do awake him, let him see you. I don't doubt of his being in sound senses then.

Cor. Very well, I will do as you wish.

Doct. Please, Madam, draw closer, and let the music be louder there !

Cor. O my dear father ! May my lips be the medicine to you, recovery of your senses, and let this kiss redress those violent injuries that my two sisters have inflicted on one so venerable as you.

Kent. Benevolent and dear Princess, that you are !

Cor. Even if you had not been their father, these snowy locks would have claimed pity as due from them. Was this a face to stand in the midst of violent winds ? To stand against the outrageous thunder, armed with the terrible bolt ? In the most dreadful and swift stroke of quick forked lightning? How much more pitiable to have watched a poor sentry, overwhelmed by the perils, bold to fight against the turbulent storm with no other protection except his scanty locks ! Even my enemy's dog, though he had bitten me, should have been allowed a place, near the fire. And poor and helpless father, were you happy to shelter yourself in a hovel, with swine and forsaken vagabonds, in a scanty and mouldy dwelling? Alas, alas ! it is wonderful that your wits and life had not entirely perished ! He wakes ; should he be spoken to ?

Doct. Madam, you do speak, it is the most proper moment for doing so.

Cor. How does my royal Lord? How fares your Majesty?

Lear. You do me wrong to take me out o' th' grave;
Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound
Upon a wheel of fire, that mine own tears
Do scald like molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you know me?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know; where did you die?

Cor. Still, still far wide.

Doct. He's scarce awake; let him alone awhile.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?
I am mightily abus'd. I should e'en die with pity
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands: let's see;
I fell this pin prick. Would I were assur'd
Of my condition!

Cor. O! look upon me, sir,
And hold your hand in benediction o'er me.
No, sir, you must not kneel.

Lear. Pray, do not mock me;
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or less;
And, to deal plainly,
I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
Methinks I should know you and know this man;
Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
What place this is, and all the skill I have
Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
For, as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia.

Cor. And so I am, I am.

Lear. Be your tears wet? Yes, faith, I pray, weep not;
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
You have some cause, they have not.

Cor. How do you feel, my royal Lord ? How does your Majesty fare now ?

Lear. It is something wrong on your part to take me out of my grave. You are an angel from the heaven but I am doomed to the torments of the hell for my sins, so that the tears of repentance, as they fall, burn my cheeks like the molten lead.

Cor. Sir, do you recognize me ?

Lear. You are a spirit, I know ; but where did you die ?

Cor. Still, still his wits are wandering, far from the purpose.

Doct. He is hardly awake; let him be left to him for a while.

Lear. Where have I been? Where am I at this moment? Am I alive and in the enjoyment of the daylight ? I am violently deceived by the mind and senses. I should have died out of pity, seeing another man in such a wretched plight. I don't know, what should I speak ? I am not sure, so as to swear these hands are mine own. Let us see what happens. I feel this pin pricking me. I wish I could be assured of the real condition wherein I am placed.

Cor. O ! Look upon me, sir, and hold your graceful hand in blessing over me. No, sir, you must not kneel before me.

Lear. I pray you, do not scoff at me. I am a very foolish old man, silly in dotage, and am exactly fourscore and above. To be quite candid with you, I am afraid, my mind and senses are not in their perfect equilibrium. It seems to me I should recognize you as well as this man ; nonetheless I am doubtful, because I am entirely ignorant as to what this place is, and all my senses do not help me to recollect what garments I have worn. I certainly don't know where did I lodge last night. Do not laugh at me and ridicule. As I am a man, my memory leads me to think this lady to be my child Cordelia and none else.

Cor. And so I am, I am that.

Lear. Do you wet with your tears ? Yes, in faith, I pray, you should not weep. If you have poison, give it to me, I will gladly drink it. I know you have no love for me. As I do recollect, your sisters have been thoroughly unjust to me. You have sufficient reason for becoming angry at me and not loving me; they don't have any such cause.

Cor. No cause, no cause.

Lear. Am I in France?

Kent. In your own kingdom, sir.

Lear. Do not abuse me.

Doct. Be comforted, good Madam; the great rage,
You see, is kill'd in him: and yet it is danger
To make him even o'er the time he has lost.
Desire him to go in; trouble him no more
Till further settling.

Cor. Will't please your Highness walk?

Lear. You must bear with me.
Pray you, now forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, CORDELIA, Doctor, *and* Attendants.

Gent. Holds it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was so slain?

Kent. Most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is conductor of his people?

Kent. As 'tis said, the bastard son of Gloucester.

Gent. They say Edgar, his banish'd son, is with the Earl of Kent in Germany.

Kent. Report is changeable. 'Tis time to look about; the powers of the kingdom approach apace.

Gent. The arbitrement is like to be bloody.
Fare you well, sir. [*Exit.*

Kent. My point and period will be throughly wrought,
Or well or ill, as this day's battle's fought. [*Exit.*

Cor. No cause, I don't have any cause that prevents me from loving you.

Lear. Am I in France at the moment ?

Kent. No, sir, you are not in France, you are in your own kingdom.

Lear. Do not deceive me.

Doct. Be at comfort, good Madam ; the great delirium, you have noticed, is now quelled in him. And yet it is perilous, rather a stumbling block to his mind to make all that he has passed during his interval of madness, plain to him. He should not be troubled any more until his mind is more composed.

Cor. Will your Highness be pleased to withdraw ?

Lear. You must be with me, for I crave your company so much. I implore you now to forget my past blunder, and pardon me. I am after all an old foolish fellow.

[*Exeunt* LEAR, CORDELIA, Doctor, *and* Attendants.

Gent. Is it true, sir, that the Duke of Cornwall was killed in that manner ?

Kent. That is most certain, sir.

Gent. Who is the general of his forces ?

Kent. As I have heard, the illegitimate son of Gloucester leads his forces.

Gent. It is said that Edgar, his banished son, is at present in Germany living with the Earl of Kent.

Kent. The rumours on the subject vary. But it is certainly time to act cautiously, as the forces of the kingdom are fast approaching towards us.

Gent. The decisive encounter is likely to be bloody. May you fare well, sir.

[*Exit.*

Kent. My life's end and object will be attained or lost according as we win or lose this battle.

[*Exit.*

ACT V

SCENE I.—[*The British camp near Dover.*]

Enter with drum and colours, EDMUND, REGAN, *Officers, Soldiers, and Others.*

Edm. Know of the Duke if his last purpose hold,
Or whether since he is advis'd by aught
To change the course ; he's full of alteration
And self-reproving ; bring his constant pleasure.
[*To an Officer, who goes out.*

Reg. Our sister's man is certainly miscarried.

Edm. 'Tis to be doubted, Madam.

Reg. Now, sweet Lord,
You know the goodness I intend upon you :
Tell me, but truly, but then speak the truth—
Do you not love my sister ?

Edm. In honour'd love.

Reg. But have you never found my brother's way
To the forfended place ?

Edm. That thought abuses you.

Reg. I am doubtful that you have been conjunct
And bosom'd with her ; as far as we call hers.

Edm. No, by mine honour, Madam.

Reg. I never shall endure her : dear my Lord,
Be not familiar with her.

Edm. Fear me not.
She and the Duke her husband !

Enter, with drum and colours, ALBANY, GONERIL, *and Soldiers.*

Gon. [*Aside.*] I had rather lose the battle than that
Should loosen him and me.

ACT V

SCENE I. [*The British camp near* DOVER.]

Enter, with drum and colours, EDMUND, REGAN, *Officers, Soldiers, and Others.*

Edm. Ascertain of the Duke whether his original plans are to be executed, or whether anything has occurred to make him think it is advisable to change them. He is but full of vacillation and motivated by conscientious scruples, frequently finding faults with every step that he has taken. Bring me word of what he has definitely determined.

[*To an Officer, who goes out.*

Reg. Our sister's servant seems to have met with some fatal accident.

Edm. That should make us apprehensive, Madam.

Reg. Now, sweet Lord, you know pretty well the honour I intend to confer upon you. Tell me the truth itself, even though it be unpalatable to me. Are you not in love with my sister ?

Edm. I am but in honourable love with her.

Reg. But have you never made an access to my brother's bed ; to the forbidden place ?

Edm. Even that very contemplation deceives you.

Reg. I am afraid you have been united with her and embraced her, so that, besides being admitted to her confidence, we must necessarily call you hers.

Edm. No, I assert it by my honour, it is not as you think.

Reg. Dear my Lord, I shall never suffer her to be so much more intimate with you.

Edm. Don't be sceptical about me, and see here she comes with her husband.

Enter, with drum and colours, ALBANY, GONERIL, *and Soldiers.*

Gon. [*Aside.*] I had better lose the battle than that sister should be able to estrange Edmund from me.

Alb. Our very loving sister, well be-met.
Sir, this I heard, the King to his daughter
With others whom the rigour of our state
Forc'd to cry out. Where I could not be honest,
I never yet was valiant ; for this business,
It touches us, as France invades our land,
Not bolds the King, with others, whom, I fear,
Most just and heavy causes make oppose.

Edm. Sir, you speak nobly.

Reg. Why is this reason'd ?

Gon. Combine to gether 'gainst the enemy ;
For these domestic and particular broils
Are not the question here.

Alb. Let's then determine
With th' ancient of war on our proceeding.

Edm. I shall attend you presently at your tent.

Reg. Sister, you'll go with us ?

Gon. No.

Reg. 'Tis most convenient ; pray go with us.

Gon. [*Aside.*] O, ho ! I know the riddle. I will go.

[*As they are going out, Enter* EDGAR *disguised.*].

Edg. If e'er your grace had speech with man so poor,
Hear me one word.

Alb. I'll overtake you.

[*Exeunt* EDMUND, REGAN, GONERIL, *Officers, Soldiers, and Attendants.*

Speak.

Edg. Before you fight the battle, ope this letter.
If you have victory, let the trumpet sound
For him that brought it : wretched though I seem,
I can produce a champion that will prove
What is avouched there. If you miscarry,
Your business of the world hath so an end,
And machination ceases. Fortune love you !

Alb. Stay till I have read the letter.

Alb. Our dear sister well met at an opportune moment. Sir, I have heard that the King has come to his youngest daughter with others, whom the acrimony of our rule has filled with deep frustration. I can never fight bravely when I feel that I am not acting an honourable part. What strikes important to me is that the King of France invades our country, not that he emboldens the King and others, who, I am afraid, have just cause for rising in arms against us.

Edm. Sir, you do speak in a noble strain.

Reg. What is the use of all this discussion ?

Gon. The exigency of the moment compels us to unite ourselves against the enemy's forces, because these domestic dissensions and private quarrels are not the matters we have to ponder over now.

Alb. Let us then be advised by the veterans skilled in military affairs, as are on the juncture of marching ahead.

Edm. I shall rejoin you at once at your tent.

Reg. Sister, will you not accompany us ?

Gon. No, I shall not.

Reg. It is most befitting : please accompany us.

Gon. [*Aside.*] O, ho ! I see what you are driving at. You want my company, only as you might anxiously watch over all my dealings with Edmund. I will be with you.

[*As they are going out, Enter,* EDGAR *disguised.*]

Edg. If ever your honour had condescended to speak with man so poor such as I, hear me one word.

Alb. I will catch you.

[*Exeunt* EDMUND, REGAN, GONERL, *Officers, Soldiers and Attendants.*

Speak, what you want to.

Edg. Before you fight out this battle, open this letter. If you come out victorious, let the trumpet sound for him, who brought it to you. By my very appearance, I am wretched, nevertheless I can produce a champion that will prove whatever is maintained there. If you lose the battle and perish, you will have done with worldly affairs and the plots now laid against you will necessarily come to an end. May you be Fortune's favourite.

Alb. Wait until I have read over the letter.

Edg. I was forbid it.
When time shall serve, let but the herald cry,
And I'll appear again.

Alb. Why, fare thee well:
I will o'erlook thy paper. [*Exit* EDGAR.

Re-enter EDMUND.

Edm. The enemy's in view; draw up your powers.
Here is the guess of their true strength and forces
By diligent discovery; but your haste
Is now urged on you.

Alb. We will greet the time. [*Exit.*

Edm. To both these sisters have I sworn my love;
Each jealous of the other, as the stung
Are of the adder. Which of them shall I take?
Both? one? or neither? Neither can be enjoy'd
If both remain alive: to take the widow
Exasperates, makes mad her sister Goneril;
And hardly shall I carry out my side,
Her husband being alive. Now then, we'll use
His countenance for the battle; which being done,
Let her who would be rid of him devise
His speedy taking off. As for the mercy
Which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia,
The battle done, and they within our power,
Shall never see his pardon; for my state
Stands on me to defend, not to debate.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—[*A field between the two camps.*]

[*Alarum within, Enter, with drum and colours,* LEAR, CORDELIA *and their forces*; *and exeunt.*]

Enter EDGAR, *and* GLOUCESTER.

Edg. Here, father, take the shadow of this tree
For your good host; pray that the right may thrive.
If ever I return to you again,
I'll bring you comfort.

Glou Grace go with you, sir!
[*Exit* EDGAR.

Edg. I am forbidden to wait while you read it. When the necessity shall arise, let but the herald cry and I will once again appear, instantly.

Alb. Why, may you fare well. I will peruse your letter. [*Exit* Edgar.

Re-enter EDMUND.

Edm. The enemies are hovering over us. Draw up your troops. Here do I present the estimate of their exact strength and powers I have obtained by meticulous reconnoitring, but now make haste, we have not even a minute to lose.

Alb. We shall rise to the occasion and readily meet the emergency. [*Exit.*

Edm. I have pledged my love to both of these sisters, who are mutually suspicious, as the stings are of the venomous viper. I am but on tenterhooks, as to whom out of the two shall I choose, whether both of them, or one of them, or neither of them? In case both of them remain alive, neither can be enjoyed. If I accept the widow, that is very much annoying and would drive her sister, Goneril, mad, and there will be but little hope of my rcarrying out my game with success, so long as her husband remains alive. For the present, we will make use of his suppoto in the battle, which being decided, let her, who would like, to get rid of him, plot for his speedy death. As for the generosity, he intends to show to Lear and to Cordelia, the battle being over and they being in our power they shall never live to receive his pardon, As for my position I have reached, it provides no scope for discussion as to whether it is right or wrng, and demands me to defend it. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—[*A field between the two camps.*]

Alarum within. Enter, with drum and colours, LEAR, CORDELIA, *and their forces* ; *and Exeunt.*

Enter EDGAR, *and* GLOUCESTER.

Edg. Here, father, let this tree by its shelter accord a welcome to you. Pray to God that the right may prosper and the truth prevail. If ever I come back next time, I will see that you are comforted.

Glou. May the grace of Almighty God accompany you, sir! [*Exit* EDGAR.

Alarum ; afterwards a retreat. Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Away, old man ! give me thy hand : away !
King Lear hath lost, he and his daughter ta'en.
Give me thy hand ; come on.

Glou. No further, sir ; a man may rot even here.

Edg. What ! in ill thoughts again ? Men must endure
Their going hence, even as their coming hither :
Ripeness is all. Come on.

Glou. And that's true too. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—[*The British camp near Dover.*]

Enter in conquest, with drum and colours, EDMUND LEAR *and* CORDELIA, *prisoners* ; Officers, Soldiers, *etc.*

Edm. Some officers take thim away : good guard,
Until their greater pleasures first be known
That are to censure them.

Cor. We are not the first
Who, with best meaning, have incurr'd the worst.
For thee, oppressed King, I am cast down ;
Myself could else out-frown false Fortune's frown.
Shall we not see these daughters and these sisters ?

Lear. No, no, no, no, ! Come, let's away to prison.
We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage ;
When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
And ask of thee forgiveness ; so we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of court news ; and we'll talk with them too—
Who loses and who wins ; who's in, who's out—
And take upon's the mystery of things
As if we were gods' spies ; and we'll wear out
In a wall'd prison, packs and sects of great ones
That ebb and flow by th' moon.

Alarum ; afterwards a retreat. Re-enter EDGAR.

Edg. Be off, old man ! Give me your hand : get yourself off ! King Lear has lost the battle, and he and his daughter both have been arrested. Give me your hand and let us move hence.

Glou. No more shall we proceed further, sir ; this spot will be good enough for dying on.

Edg. What ! Are you again overcome by your sinister thoughts of suicide ? In this mysterious world, men, after all, must reconcile themselves to the manner of their death, as of their birth. The one significant thing with regard to death is that we should be ready for it. Come on, let's move hence quickly.

Glou. You are right, that also being true as well as what I said just now. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—[*The British camp near Dover.*]

Enter in conquest, with drum and colours, EDMUND ;
LEAR *and* CORDELIA, *prisoners* ; Officers, Soldiers, *etc.*

Edm. Let them be taken away by some officers and good guard be kept over them, until the will of those, my superiors, who are to determine their fate, is known.

Cor. We are not the first among those who, even with the best intentions, have brought the worst upon themselves. For you, acrimoniously-treated King, I am much dejected. As for myself, I could even otherwise subdue the Fortune's disfavour by a greater resistance. Shall we not see these women who call themselves your daughters and my sisters ; but who have shown but little of what is filial or sisterly ?

Lear. No, no, no, no ! Come, let us go hence to a prison, where only we two will pass our days, singing like birds in the cage. When you ask me for my blessing, I will myself kneel down and ask you for forgiveness. In that way we shall pass our life in praying, singing, and narrating the improbable fictions of bygone time, and laughing at the gay courtiers and listening from the wretched creatures their talks and gossip on the tidings of the court. And we will also talk with them about who is in favour, who is out of favour, which party is in power, which in the cold shade of opposition, and would take upon us to penetrate the occult motives by which human actions are governed, as if we were the spies, sent for that very purpose by gods. And thus we will outlive in a walled prison, the cliques and parties, that have no more stability than the tides, which are governed by the moon.

Edm. Take them away.

Lear. Upon such sacrifices, my Cordelia,
The gods themselves throw incense. Have I caught thee?
He that parts us shall bring a brand from heaven,
And fire us hence like foxes. Wipe thine eyes;
The good years shall devour them, flesh and fell,
Ere they shall make us weep: we'll see 'em starv'd first.
Come. [*Exeunt* LEAR *and* CORDELIA, *guarded.*

Edm. Come hither, Captain; hark.
Take thou this note; [*Giving a paper.*
Go, follow them to prison.
One step I have advanc'd thee; if thou dost
As this instructs thee, thou dost make thy way
To noble fortunes; know thou this, that men
Are as the time is; to be tender-minded
Does not become a sword; thy great employment
Will not bear question; either say thou'lt do't,
Or thrive by other means.

Offi. I'll do't, my Lord.

Edm. About it; and write happy when th' hast done.
Mark,—I say, instantly, and carry it so
As I have set it down.

Offi. I cannot draw a cart nor eat dried oats;
If it be man's work I'll do't. [*Exit.*

Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, Officers, *and* Soldiers.

Alb. Sir, you have show'd to-day your valiant strain,
And Fortune led you well; you have the captives
Who were the opposites of this day's strife;
I do require them of you, so to use them.

Edm. Take them away from here.

Lear. My Cordelia, upon such sacrifices, the gods themselves throw incense, showing their approbation and santicfication. Now that I have you with me, I will not let myself be parted from you. Nothing less than the will of heaven shall be sufficient to part us from each other, as foxes are expelled from their holes by fire and smoke. Wipe your eyes and weep no more. The cursed time shall swallow them altogether; and before they shall be able to make us weep, we will first see them starving. Come, let us move.

[*Exeunt* LEAR *and* CORDELIA, *guarded.*

Edm. Come this way, Captain, listen to me. Take this warrant of the execution of Lear and Cordelia. [*Giving a paper.*] Conduct them to prison. I have obtained one step of promotion for you and if you sincerely carry out the instructions, so as to act accordingly, you prosper and be the favourite of noble fortunes. Keep this in your mind that men should conduct themselves in accordance with the circumstances, without paying heed to the irrelevancies, such as compassion and humanity. To be soft-minded and be vulnerable does not become of a soldier. The weighty business, upon which you are to be employed, is one which cannot be discussed. Hence, either tell me you will do it best or seek for some one else to advance your interests, without expecting any succour from me.

Offi. I will do it, in the way you want from me to, my Lord.

Edm. Do it that way; and account yourself fortunate, when you have done your part. Mark—I tell you, this must be done immediately and manage the affair in such a way, that it will appear that Cordelia slew herself. Let my instructions be followed exactly as I have set them down.

Offi. I am not a mere beast of burden like a horse, nor do I want to be driven by necessity after the war, to become an agricultural labourer. If it becomes a man, to do it, I will do it.

[*Exit.*

Flourish. Enter ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, Officers, *ana* Soldiers.

Alb. Sir, you have shown to-day your brave disposition, as due to your descent, and Fortune has also given you a good opportunity of showing your spirit. You have the captives, who were the opponents during the day's struggle—I do require

As we shall find their merits and our safety
May equally determine.
Edm. Sir, I thought it fit
To send the old and miserable King
To some retention and appointed guard;
Whose age had charms in it, whose title more,
To pluck the common bosom on his side,
And turn our impress'd lances in our eyes
Which do command them. With him I sent the Queen;
My reason all the same; and they are ready
To-morrow, or at further space, t' appear
Where you shall hold your session. At this time
We sweat and bleed; the friend hath lost his friend;
And the best quarrels, in the heat, are curs'd
By those that feel their sharpness.
The question of Cordelia and her father
Requires a fitter place.
Alb. Sir, by your patience,
I hold you but a subject of this war,
Not as a brother.
Reg. That's as we list to grace him.
Methinks our pleasure might have been demanded
Ere you had spoke so far. He led our powers,
Bore the commission of my place and person,
The which immediacy may well stand up
And call itself your brother.
Gon. Not so hot.
In his own grace he doth exalt himself,
More than in your addition.
Reg. In my rights,
By me invested, he compeers the best.
Alb. That were the most, if he should husband you.
Reg. Jesters do oft prove prophets!

them of you, for so deciding their case as to give them a treatment, which shall not be more acrimonious than what our safety demands, taking into account the character of their deserts and offence.

Edm. Sir, I thought it proper to send the old miserable King to some confinement with a guard set to keep watch. The King, seeing that he is old, has charms in it, and his very title is enough for him to win the hearts of the people and turn the weapons of our soldiers, we have impressed into our service, against us, who command them. I have also sent the Queen with him, for almost the same reason. They are ready tomorrow itself, or at any later date, to appear, where you shall hold your court to try the prisoners taken. At this moment, we still perspire and bleed, war-weary as we are, our own people seem to have been separated from ourselves and the quarrels, however just their cause, in the excitement of the battle, the passions being roused very high, are cursed by those who suffer from its consequences. This, however, is not the right moment or opportune place to deal with such an extremely important issue, *viz.*, to decide the fate of Cordelia and her father.

Alb. Sir, if you will pardon my saying so, I consider you, who in the matter of this war, in reference to the circumstances of war, is subordinate to my command, not as a brother, entitled to equal rank, with us.

Reg. That depends upon how far are we pleased to honour him, with our special favour. It seems proper to me that my will in the matter might have been asked, before you said so much on the subject. He led our forces and was commissioned to represent me and my authority, and this intimate relationship of him with me may justly assert his footing of equality with you, he calling himself your brother as well.

Gon. Do not be in such a haste to exalt him. His best title to eminence is his own intrinsic merit and noble qualities and hence the titles and offices that you have bestowed upon him, are but of superfluous value.

Reg. Invested, as he is by me, with all my rights, he may claim equality with the highest in the land.

Alb. That would be the most that could be said of him, even if he were your husband.

Reg. Many a word, even though spoken in jest, come out true !

Gon. Holla, holla !
That eye that told you so look'd but asquint.

Reg. Lady, I am not well ; else I should answer
From a full-flowing stomach. Goneril,
Take thou my soldiers, prisoners, patrimony ;
Dispose of them, of me ; the all is thine ;
Witness the world, I that create thee here,
My lord and master.

Gon. Mean you to enjoy him ?

Alb. The let-alone lies not in your good-will.

Edm. Nor in thine, Lord.

Alb. Half-blooded fellow, yes.

Reg. [*To* EDMUND.] Let the drum strike, and prove my title thine.

Alb. Stay yet ; hear reason. Edmund, I arrest thee
On capital treason ; and, in thy attaint,
This gilded serpent. [*Pointing to* GONERIL.
For your claim, fair sister,
I bar it in the interest of my wife ;
'Tis she is sub-contracted to this lord,
And I, her husband, contradict your banns.
If you will marry, make your loves to me—
My lady is bespoke.

Gon. An interlude !

Alb. Thou art arm'd, Gloucester ; let the trumpet sound :
If none appear to prove upon thy person
The heinous, manifest, and many treasons,
There is my pledge ; [*Throws down a glove.*
I'll make it on thy heart,
Ere I taste bread, thou art in nothing less
Than I have here proclaim'd thee.

Reg. Sick ! O, sick !

Gon. [*Aside.*] If not, I'll ne'er trust medicine.

Gon. The eye of the person, who so told you, saw things very crookedly.

Reg. Lady, I am not well, otherwise I should resent your words with adequate spirit. Goneril, you take my soldiers, prisoners, estate, that I inherited from my father, they are all but at your dispoal, and all that I possess, may be deemed as yours. Let the whole world bear witness that I hereby declare you my lord and master.

Gon. So do you intend to enjoy him?

Alb. It does not depend upon you to permit or prevent this.

Edm. Nor does it exclusively depend upon you, Lord.

Alb. You, bastardly fellow, it does exclusively depend upon me.

Reg. [*To* EDMUND.] Issue order for the drums to strike up and thus show that you wield my authority.

Alb. Wait yet, and listen to what is reasonable. Edmund, I hereby arrest you on a charge of capital treason, and in your impeachment, I also arrest this venomous creature, decked out in her splendour. [*Pointing to* GONERIL.

As for your claim for Edmund, as a husband, fair sister, I bar it on behalf of my wife, who has the first claim to him as a husband. Taking upon myself to protect her rights, I assert the fact that she is betrothed to this lord when I am got rid of, and I, as her husband, forbid the projected marriage between you and Edmund. If you are determined to marry, you had better make love to me, for my wife is already engaged and I no longer have any right in her.

Gon. What a timely comic diversion in this love affair!

Alb. You are armed for the combat, Gloucester. Let the trumpet sound ; if nobody appears to prove yourself a traitor, there is my gage to prove your obnoxious, self-evident and manifold treasons. [*Throws down a glove.*

I will prove it on your heart before I eat bread that you are in no respect less than what I have proclaimed you to be.

Reg. O sick! I am getting sick.

Gon. [*Aside.*] If you were not sick, I would never believe in the poisonous potion I administered on you.

Edm. There's my exchange.

[*Throws down a glove.*

What in the world he is
That names me traitor, villain like he lies.
Call by thy trumpet: he that dares approach,
On him, on you, who not? I will maintain
My truth and honour firmly.

Alb. A herald, ho!
Trust to thy single virtue; for thy soldiers,
All levied in my name, have in my name
Took their discharge.

Reg. My sickness grows upon me.

Alb. She is not well; convey her to my tent.

[*Exit* REGAN, *led.*

Enter a Herald.

Come hither, herald,—Let the trumpet sound,—
And read out this.

Offi. Sound, trumpet! [*A trumpet sounds.*

Her. [*Reads.*] If any man of quality or degree within the lists of the army will maintain upon Edmund, supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear by the third sound of the trumpet. He is bold in his defence.

Sound! [*First trumpet.*
Again! [*Second trumpet.*
Again! [*Third trumpet.*

[*Trumpet answers within.*

Enter EDGAR, *armed with a trumpet before him.*

Alb. Ask him his purposes, why he appears
Upon this call o' th' trumpet.

Her. What are you?
Your name? Your quality? And why you answer
This present summons?

Edg. Know, my name is lost;
By treason's tooth bare-gnawn, and canker-bit:
Yet am I noble as the adversary
I come to cope.

Edm. There is one, as my exchange. [*Throws down a glove.* Whoever in the world he may be, that calls me a traitor, he but tells a monstrous lie. Make proclamation by the sound of the trumpet : Who is he that has the courage to approach on himself, on yourself, and on any, who may appear to answer my challenge ? I will vindicate my truth and honour strongly.

Alb. A herald to come, ho ! It is but of no use your summoning a herald. In fact you have no one to trust to but yourself, for your soldiers, all of whom, were engaged by me, have by me, been discharged.

Reg. My sickness is prevailing on my body.

Alb. She is feeling unwell ; let her be conducted to my tent. [*Exit* REGAN, *led.*

Enter a Herald.

Come this way, herald—let the trumpet sound,—
And you read out this proclamation.

Offi. Sound, trumpet !

Her. [*Reads.*] If any man of nobility or rank, within the schedules of the army, will maintain by combat with Edmund, supposed Earl of Gloucester, that he is a manifold traitor, let him appear by the third sound of the trumpet. He is ready boldly to defend himself !
Sound, the trumpet ! [*First trumpet.*
Sound again ! [*Second trumpet.*
Sound once again ! [*Third trumpet.*
[*Trumpet answers within.*

Enter EDGAR, *armed with a trumpet before him.*

Alb. Ask him what motives bring him here to appear upon this call of the trumpet.

Her. Who are you ? What is your name ? What is your birth and status ? And why do you answer the present calls of the trumpet ?

Edg. Note that my name is lost, my flesh gnawed away by treason's tooth and eaten by the caterpillar, nonetheess, I am as much noble as the adversary, whom I have come to encounter.

Alb. Which is that adversary?

Edg. What's he that speaks for Edmund, Earl of Gloucester?

Edm. Himself: What say'st thou to him?

Edg. Draw thy sword,
That if my speech offend a noble heart,
Thy arm may do thee justice; here is mine:
Behold it is the privilege of mine honours,
My oath, and my profession: I protest,
Maugre thy strength, youth, place, and eminence,
Despite thy victor sword and fire-new fortune,
Thy valour and thy heart, thou art a traitor,
False to thy gods, thy brother, and thy father;
Conspirant 'gainst this high illustrious prince,
And, from th' extremest upward of thy head
To the descent and dust below thy foot,
A most toad-spotted traitor. Say thou "No",
This sword, this arm, and my best spirits, are bent
To prove upon thy heart, whereto I speak,
Thou liest.

Edm. In wisdom I should ask thy name;
But since thy outside looks so fair and warlike,
And that thy tongue some say of breeding breathes,
What safe and nicely I might well delay
By rule of knighthood, I disdain and spurn;
Back do I toss these treasons to thy head,
With the hell-hated lie o'erwhelm thy heart,
Which, for they yet glance by and scarcely bruise,
This sword of mine shall give them instant way,
Where they shall rest for ever. Trumpets speak.

[*Alarums. They fight.* EDMUND *falls.*

Alb. Save him, save him!

Alb. Who is that opponent, you refer to ?

Edg. Who is he that answers for when Edmund, Earl of Gloucester, is challenged ?

Edm. Edmund, Earl of Gloucester, himself accepts the challenge. What is it that you would speak to him ?

Edg. Draw your sword, that if the accusations I am about to utter, are undeserved, let it be proved by the courage with which you acquit yourself. Here I draw my sword : it is the privilege of my knighthood to draw my sword, as this which you now behold, for the purpose of challenging a traitor. And it is a privilege of mine to have, such a challenge accepted, of the oath I swore, when I was knighted and of my knighthood itself. Consequently I protest, despite your strength, status, youth and eminence ; despite your victorious sword and brand new fortune ; your courage and bravery,—that you are a traitor, false to your gods, your father, your brother, conspiring against this highly dignified and noble prince. And from the extremest top of your head to the very lowest part of your body, yea, even to the dust—beneath your foot, you are a most villainous and venomous traitor, your soul being stained with treason as thickly as the body of a toad is with blotches of colour. If you should say, you are not one as I described, this sword, this arm and all the courage that I have in me, are determined to prove upon your heart, to which my words will reach ; your lie is but a monstrous one.

Edm. If I thought of prudence, it not being incumbent upon me to meet in combat, one of inferior rank, I should ask about your name, birth and status. But since your external appearance is so fair, and one befitting a warrior, and since that your tongue utters some evidence of your being noble, I scorn to insist my legal rights under the code of knighthood, whereby I being cautious and punctilious, might have postponed this combat. I fling back these charges of treason in your teeth, your lie being as much abominable as the hell itself, crushing your heart, down with its weight. And since these charges of treason and falsehood are scarcely felt by you, my sword shall quickly make a passage for them to your heart, where they shall find a final resting-place. Let the trumpets sound. [*Alarums. They fight.* EDMUND *falls.*

Alb. Save him, save him !

Gon. This is practice, Gloucester ;
By th' law of war thou wast not bound to answer
An unknown opposite ; thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd and beguil'd.

Alb. Shut your mouth, dame,
Or with this paper shall I stopple it. Hold, sir ;
Thou worse than any name, read thine own evil :
No tearing, lady, I perceive you know it.

Gon. Say, if I do, the laws are mine, not thine :
Who can arraign me for't ?

Alb. Most monstrous ! O !
Know'st thou this paper ?

Gon. Ask me not what I know. [*Exit.*

Alb. Go after her ; she's desperate ; govern her.
[*Exit an* Officer.

Edm. What you have charg'd me with, that have I done
And more, much more, ; the time will bring it out :
'Tis past, and so am I. But what art thou
That hast this fortune on me ? If thou'rt noble,
I do forgive thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity.
I am no less in blood than thou art, Edmund ;
If more, the more th' hast wrong'd me,
My name is Edgar, and thy father's son.
The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us :
The dark and vicious place where thee he got
Cost him his eyes.

Edm. Th' hast spoken right, 'tis true.
The wheel is come full circle ; I am here.

Gon. This is treachery, Gloucester, as according to the laws of the combat you should not have been compelled to fight an adversary, whose whereabouts are unknown. In fact you are not defeated, but cheated and tricked out of your life.

Alb. Shut your mouth, lady, or with this love letter of yours, you wrote to Edmund, I shall close it. Take this paper in your hands, sir, you worse than anybody in the world, read but your own vicious designs in it. Keep your hands off, I will have no tearing. I discern that you are already in the know of it.

Gon. Suppose, even if I do recognize the paper, the laws of the land are in my hands not in yours. Who can be impertinent so as to arrest me for that ?

Alb. O ! it is most heinous. Do you actually know about this paper ?

Gon. Don't ask me about what I know. [*Exit.*

Alb. Follow her, for she is utterly frustrated. Keep a proper watch and control over her. [*Exit an* Officer.

Edm. All your accusations with regard to my deeds are true, nay even more, much more than that, which the time alone will unravel it. That is a thing of past and equally so am I. But who are you, who have had the good fortune to overcome me ? If you are noble, you have my pardon.

Edg. Let me forgive you for your crimes against me, as you have forgiven me for killing you. I am of equal birth with you, Edmund. If I should tell you more, the more that you have wronged me. My name is Edgar, and I am but your brother. The gods are just, and out of our vices, the indulgence of which being pleasurable to us, they make weapons of vengeance, with which to smite us. The adulterous bed, where you were begotten by him, has eventually resulted into the loss of his eyes.

Edm. You have spoken the right thing. What you have said, as to the gods' making our sins the means of our punishment, is true, for by a turn of fortune's wheel, the revolution of events is completed, as I who was just now so high, am here laid low in death because of my crimes.

Alb. Methought thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness : I must embrace thee :
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee or thy father.

Edg. Worthy prince, I know't.

Alb. Where have you hid yourself ?
How have you known the miseries of your father ?

Edg. By nursing them, my Lord. List a brief tale ;
And when 'tis told, O ! that my heart would burst !
The bloody proclamation to escape
That follow'd me so near.—O ! our lives' sweetness
That we the pain of death would hourly die
Rather than die at once !—taught me to shift
Into a madman's rags, t' assume a semblance
That very dogs disdain'd : and in this habit
Met I my father with his bleeding rings,
Their precious stones now lost ; became his guide,
Let him ; begg'd for him, sav'd him from despair ;
Never—O fault !—reveal'd myself unto him.
Until some half-hour past, when I was arm'd ;
Not sure, though hoping, of this good success.
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last
Told him my pilgrimage : but his flaw'd heart,
Alack, too weak the conflict to support !
'Twixt two extremes of passion, joy and grief,
Burst smilingly.

Edm. This speech of yours hath mov'd me,
And shall perchance do good : but speak you on ;
You look as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more woeful, hold it in ;
For I am almost ready to dissolve,

Alb. It seemed to me that your very appearance was enough to predict you one belonging to royal nobility. I must embrace you : If ever I had an occasion to be repugnant to you or to your father, let sorrow crack my heart.

Edg. Noble prince, I am well aware of your benevolence.

Alb. Where did you hide yourself during all this time ? How could you, even in your concealment, come to know about the hardships and misfortunes of your father ?

Edg. I know about his fortunes by bringing solace to him. Listen to a brief tale, that, when I have narrated, O ! that my heart would burst ! To escape the consequences of bloody proclamation, which consequences followed at my heels—looking to them, O ! that it would be so much more pleasant to our lives that makes us willing hourly to suffer pain as great as that of death, rather than dying all at once !—The misfortunes have taught me to change myself into a madman in rags, assuming a countenance that would be disdainful even to the dogs. And in this dress I met my father, with the bleeding sockets of his eyes, their dear jewels being recently lost, and I became his guide. I led him, begged for him and saved him from frustration and sinister ideas. Never—a blunder and a misfortune too, it was—never did I reveal myself to him, until about a half hour past, when I was armed. Not fully assured though hoping of this good success, I asked for his blessing ; and from beginning to end narrated the tale of my pilgrimage, full of worries and wanderings, trials and tribulations. But his heart, already damaged by innumerable sufferings—alas ! being too weak to sustain the struggle between the two extremes of strong emotions—of joy and grief, burst smilingly.

Edm. This rather pathetic tale of yours has moved me, and shall by chance be of good purpose to us. But continue your speech, as you seem to have had something more yet to be narrated.

Alb. If there be still more, and of a more sorrowful nature, keep it with you in reserve, because I am almost ready to melt into tears, having heard even this much.

Edg. This would have seem'd a period
To such as love not sorrow ; but another,
To amplify too much, would make much more,
And top extremity.
Whilst I was big in clamour came there in a man,
Who, having seen me in my worst estate,
Shunn'd my abhorr'd society ; but then, finding
Who 'twas that so endur'd with his strong arms
He fasten'd on my neck, and bellow'd out
As he'd burst heaven ; threw him on my father ;
Told the most piteous tale of Lear and him
That ever ear receiv'd which in recounting
His grief grew puissant, and the strings of life
Began to crack ; twice then the trumpets sounded,
And there I left him tranc'd.

Alb. But who was

Edg. Kent, sir, the banish'd Kent ; who in disguise
Follow'd his enemy King, and did him service
Improper for a slave.

Enter a Gentleman, *with a bloody knife.*

Gent. Help, help ! O, help !

Edg. What kind of help ?

Alb. Speak, man.

Edg. What means this bloody knife ?

Gent. 'Tis hot, it smokes ;
It came even from the heart of—O ! she's dead.

Alb. Who dead ? Speak, man.

Gent. Your lady, sir, your lady : and her sister
By her is poison'd ; she confesses it.

Edm. I was contracted to them both : all three

Edg. To those, who are not in love with sorrow, this would seem a termination, beyond which suffering could not go. But another sorrow by enlarging what is already too much, would make 'much' into 'more' and would surpass the extreme limits of woe. While I was loudly lamenting over my father's death, there came inside, a man, who having seen me in my worst condition, at first, thought of getting rid of my wretched company, but then, finding as to who it was that suffered so terribly, he with his strong arms, fastened on my neck, shouted aloud as if he would rent the skies, and threw himself on the dead body of my father. He then narrated the most pathetic and pitiable tale of Lear and of himself, that the ears ever could hear of. In relating the events of the tale, his grief grew powerful and his heart-strings began to crack. At that moment the trumpets sounded twice, and I left him in an entranced state.

Alb. But who was this person ?

Edg. He was Kent, sir, who was sent into exile, that Kent, —but who in disguise followed his hostile King, and did him service such as even a slave could hardly be called upon to perform.

Enter a Gentleman, *with a bloody knife*.

Gent. Help, help ! O, help !

Edg. What kind of help do you cry for ?

Alb. Speak out man what succour do you need ?

Edg. What does this bloody knife with you imply ?

Gent. It is hot, it steams, it came even from her very heart—O ! Alas ! She is dead.

Alb. Who it was that died ? Speak, man.

Gent. It was your lady, sir, your lady herself that committed suicide, and poisoned her sister Regan, and this she herself confesses.

Edm. I was betrothed to both of them ; and now we all three, a moment hence, will be united in death.

Edg. Here comes Kent, now.

Enter KENT

Alb. Produce the bodies, be they alive or dead ;
[*Exit* Gentleman.

This judgment of the heavens, that makes us tremble,
Touches us not with pity. [*To* KENT.] O ! is this he ?
The time will not allow the compliment
Which very manner urges.

Kent. I am come
To bid my King and master aye good night ;

Alb. Great thing of us forgot !
Speak, Edmund, where's the King ? and where's
Cordelia ?

Seest thou this object, Kent ?
[*The bodies of* GONERIL *and* REGAN *are brought in.*

Kent. Alack ! why thus ?

Edm. Yet Edmund was belov'd :
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after slew herself.

Alb. Even so. Cover their faces.

Edm. I pant for life ; some good I mean to do
Despite of my own nature. Quickly send,
Be brief in it, to th' castle, for my writ
Is on the life of Lear and on Cordelia.
Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run ! O, run !

Edg. To who, my Lord ? Who has the office ? Send !
Thy token of reprieve.

Edm. Well thought on. Take my sword,
Give it the Captain.

Edg. Haste thee, for thy life.
[*Exit* Officer.

Edm. He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she forbid herself.

Alb. The gods defend her !
Bear him hence awhile. [EDMUND *is borne off.*

Enter KENT.

Alb. Produce the bodies before us, whether they be dead or alive. [*Exit* Gentleman.] This is but a judgment of heavens that make us tremble out of fear, but does not excite us with pity. [*To* KENT.] O ! Is this Kent, himself ? There is but little time left for the formal greetings, which even the slightest good breeding would insist upon us.

Kent. I have come over here to bid my King, my master goodnight for ever. Is he not to be found here ?

Alb. We have forgotten an important matter. Speak, Edmund, where is the King ? And where is Cordelia at this moment? Do you but see this most horrible sight, Kent ?

[*The bodies of* GONERIL *and* REGAN *are brought in.*

Kent. Alas ! Why has it all happened thus ?

Edm. Nevertheless, Edmund was beloved to them. The one in order to win me, poisoned the other and thereafter killed herself.

Alb. Yes, things have happened but even to this extent. Let their faces be covered.

Edm. I pant for life, to be allowed sufficient time to save Lear and Cordelia. In spite of my naturally cruel disposition, I intend to do some good. Quickly send—rather be quickest—an officer to the castle, for I have issued writ for the execution of Lear and Cordelia. No, send him in time, instantly.

Alb. Run, run ! O, run !

Edg. Run, but to whom, my Lord ? Who has been commissioned to carry out your order? Send your signature, agreed in case of a reprieve.

Edm. You have but wisely thought : you take my sword, which you give to the Captain.

Edg. Hurry up, if you value your life. [*Exit* Officer.

Edm. He has commission from your wife and me to hang Cordelia in prison itself, and do it adroitly, so as to appear that she, in her deep despair, destroyed herself.

Alb. The gods forbid to defend her ! Conduct him hence for some time. [EDMUND *is borne off.*

Enter LEAR, *with* CORDELIA *dead in his arms*; *and* Officer.

Lear. Howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones!
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever.
I know when one is dead, and when one lives;
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why, then she lives.

Kent. Is this the promis'd end?

Edg. Or image of that horror?

Alb. Fall and cease!

Lear. This feather stirs; she lives. If it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

Kent. [*Kneeling*.] O my good master!

Lear. Prithee, away.

Edg. 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

Lear. A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have sav'd her; now she's gone for ever.
Cordelia, Cordelia! stay a little, ha!
What is't thou say'st? Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low—an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the slave that was a-hanging thee.

Offi. 'Tis true, my Lords, he did.

Lear. Did I not, fellow?
I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion,
I would have made them skip; I am old now,
And these same crosses spoil me. Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o' th' best. I'll tell you straight.

Kent. If fortune brag of two she lov'd and hated,
One of them we behold.

Lear. This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

Kent. The same;
Your servant Kent. Where is your servant Caius?

Enter LEAR, *with* CORDELIA *dead in his arms* ; *and* Officer.

Lear. Howl, howl, howl ! O ! you are men, but made of stone. If I had your tongues and eyes, I would have so used them as to crack the very vault of the heaven. She has passed away for ever. I know how much more different is one, who is dead, from one, who is alive. She is dead as the lump of earth. Lend me a mirror. If that her breath will cloud or blur with moisture that crystal mirror, why then, she would certainly be alive.

Kent. Is this the promised end of the world we live in?

Edg. Or is it the image of that dreadful doom ?

Alb. The time, when the heavens may fall and make all things to cease.

Lear. This feather stirs with her breath. She lives ! If it be really so, it is a chance, which will certainly redeem all my sorrows, that I have ever felt.

Kent. [*Kneeling*.] What a pitiable sight is yours, O my good master !

Lear. I entreat you to be away.

Edg. He is noble Kent, your most worthy friend.

Lear. May you be all scourged, you all murderers and traitors ! I might have saved her life, if you had not distracted my attention. Now, alas ! she has passed away for ever! Cordelia! Cordelia ! Stay for a little time, ha ! Her voice was ever tender, gentle, mild and low, an excellent virtue in a woman. I killed that slave, who was deputed on hanging you.

Offi. It is true, my Lords, he did kill that slave.

Lear. Did I not kill him, fellow ? There was a time, in my life, when with my good keen-edged falchion, I would have made them tremble with terror. But, now I am old, and these misfortunes have enfeebled me as a swordsman. Who are you ? My eyes are not so clear-sighted, as they might be. I will tell you all candidly.

Kent. If fortune makes it a boast that there are two persons, whom she once favoured, but afterwards depressed, we see one of them here.

Lear. These eyes of mine are very dull. But tell me, are you not Kent ?

Kent. Yes, I am the same. Your servant Kent. Where is your servant named Caius ?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that ;
He'll strike, and quickly too. He's dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good Lord ; I am the very man—

Lear. I'll see that straight.

Kent. That from your first of difference and decay
Have follow'd your sad steps.

Lear. You are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else. All's cheerless, dark and deadly.
Your eldest daughters have fordone themselves
And desperately are dead.

Lear. Ay, so I think.

Alb. He knows not what he says : and vain is it
That we present us to him.

Edg. Very bootless.

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Edmund is dead, my Lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle here.
You lords and noble friends, know our intent.
What comfort to this great decay may come
Shall be applied. For us, we will resign
During the life of this old majesty,
To him our absolute power.

[*To* EDGAR *and* KENT.

You, to your rights ;
With boot, and such addition as your honours
Have more than merited. All friends shall taste
The wages of their virtue, and all foes
The cup of their deservings. O ! See, see !

Lear. And my poor fool is hang'd ! No, no, no life !
Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
And thou no breath at all ? Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never.
Pray you, undo this button. Thank you, sir.
Do you see this ? Look on her, look. Her lips,
Look there, look there !

[*Dies.*

Lear. He is a good fellow, this I can tell you of him. He will strike and be very quick too, in that. But now he seems to have been dead and rotten.

Kent. No, my good Lord, he is still alive—I am myself that very Caius.

Lear. I will attend to that in a moment.

Kent. That I, from the very beginning of the change and decline of your fortunes, have followed your sad steps, sharing your sorrows and calamities.

Lear. I am here, to accord a welcome to you.

Kent. And there was no one else, that followed you in the days of your misfortunes. All is sad, dark and deadly ; the dreadful horrors surround us. Your eldest daughters have destroyed themselves and are dead out of deep despair so that their souls are lost, without hope of salvation.

Lear. Yes, I also think that way.

Alb. He does not know, what he speaks, being least conscious thereof, and it is futile that we try to make him recognize us.

Edg. Our every endeavour, to that, would be altogether useless.

Enter an Officer.

Offi. Edmund is dead, my Lord.

Alb. What, death, that is but of little significance here ! You, lords and noble friends, know our purpose. Whatever redress is possible, will be applied to the terrible disorder of this realm. As for ourselves, we would resign our absolute power in favour of our venerable King, as long as he lives. [*To* EDGAR *and* KENT.] Do you return to the exercise of your rights, with advantages and such additional rights and titles, that because of your noble deeds, you very much more deserve. All friends shall be rewarded for their virtuous deeds, and all the foes shall taste the bitter cup filled to the brim. O ! See, see !

Lear. And my poor fool, my dear sweet innocent Cordelia is hanged ! No, no, absolutely no life ! Why should, after all, a dog, a horse, a rat have life, and you should have no breath at all ? You will not come back, any more ! Never, never, never, never, never ! I implore you to open this button of mine, so as to relieve me of the suffocation. My thanks to you, sir. Do you see this ? Look on her, look, look at her lips, look there, look there ! [*Dies*.

Edg. He faints ! My Lord, my Lord !

Kent. Break, heart ; I prithee, break !

Edg. Look up, my Lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost. O ! let him pass ; he hates him
That would upon the rack of this tough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edg. He is gone indeed.

Kent. The wonder is he hath endur'd so long :
He but unsurp'd his life.

Alb. Bear them from hence. Our present business
Is general woe. [*To* KENT *and* EDGAR] Friends of my soul, you twain
Rule in this realm, and the gor'd state sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, shortly to go.
My master calls me ; I must not say no.

Edg. The weight of this sad time we must obey ;
Speak what we feel, not what we ought to say.
The oldest hath borne most ; we that are young
Shall never see so much, nor live so long.

[*Exeunt, with a dead march.*

Edg. He swoons ! My Lord, my Lord !

Kent. Break, heart. I entreat you to break !

Edg. Look up, at me, my Lord.

Kent. Do not exasperate his departing spirit. O let him pass away in peace. He hates him, who would stretch him out for a longer time, with his body extended upon the rack of this obdurate world.

Edg. He has passed away, indeed.

Kent. It is really a wonder, that he has endured for so long, his rather cumbersome life. His hold upon his life was but a factitious one, he being sorely tired of it.

Alb. Carry them away from here. Our present business is to see that the whole realm goes into mourning. [*To* KENT *and* EDGAR.] Friends, so dear to my soul, you two rule over the kingdom, so that the state, rent and wounded by divisions, may sustain.

Kent. I have a journey, sir, that I have shortly to commence. My master, the King, calls me, not long that I have to live, I must follow him.

Edg. We must yield to the heavy burden of woe that the time has cast upou us, and give way to our natural feelings without troubling ourselves as to what sentiments we ought to utter. The oldest (Kent) has suffered most. Even if we, that are young, live as long as he has (which will hardly be possible), our existence will never light on days, as evil as those, which he has seen.

[*Exeunt, with a dead march.*

NOTES

AND

EXPLANATIONS

Notes and Explanations

ACT I : Scene I

Analysis. The opening scene of the play begins with the conversation between Kent and Gloucester, suggesting that Lear had communicated to them, his general intention of dividing his kingdom among his daughters. His "darker purpose" develops itself in the course of the scene.

King Lear is shown more than fours core years old, worn out with the fatigues of government, determined to bid good-bye to the state affairs, with a desire to entrust the younger strength with the management, and for himself thus, being unburdened, "Crawl toward death." Lear's mind, susceptible to the flattery, as it is, is obsessed by a morbid craving for verbal demonstrations of love, which would be the sole criterion for bestowing "several dowers" upon his daughters. Goneril and Regan with their 'glib and oily art', quickly respond to the king's call, with their hollow and hypocritical professions of love. The portions already earmarked by Lear, are bestowed upon them. But, what would Cordelia say "to draw a third, more opulent share. She, with her natural reticence shows her love as according to her duty. Lear in a sudden outburst of temper, alleges her heart to be "untender", and eventually denounces her as a stranger with a further resolve to divide her share in between the other two. Kent warns him bluntly against his blind injustice. Lear, getting still more furious, sends him into exile, allowing him ten days to provide him against the future discomforts and betake himself from the limits of his realm.

Meanwhile, Burgundy is asked whether he would marry the dowerless Cordelia. He refuses, but France despite the King's dissuasion, willingly accepts Cordelia, "most rich, being poor", she being herself a dowry, endowed with virtues, as she is. Cordelia bids her sisters good-bye, warning them to "love well our father". Goneril and Regan are left alone to discuss the caprice of their father and decide to jointly deal with them, before it is too late.

The opening scene, being the basis of the action of the main plot, is of considerable significance. It is in fact the pivot, on which the entire drama turns. The whole tragedy of Lear's fate (as also implicating the fate of others) springs from the initial blunder, which Lear commits in this scene.

Notes

The opening dialogue introduces the underplot, so as to give us a glimpse of Kent, before his intervention at line 125 in this scene.

1. **Had . . . affected**—had more regard, or greater affection for. To 'affect' (Lation '*affectare*') is literally 'to aim at' or 'desire' and hence 'to prefer' or 'be inclined to'.

2. **Albany**—According to Holinshed, his territory extended "from the river Humber to the point of Caithness."

4. **Division**—*N.B.* Johnson's remarkable observation on the word is as follow :—

"There is something of obscurity or inaccuracy in this preparatory scene. The King has already divided his kingdom, and yet when he enters, he examines his daughters to discover in what proportion he should divide it. Perhaps Kent and Gloucester only were privy to his design, which he still keeps in his hands, to be changed or performed as subsequent reasons should determine him."

5. **Values**—esteems. **Equalities**—equal conditions, shares. *N.B.* This is the reading of the first two Quartos. The Folios have 'qualities', which may mean—the values, the advantages and disadvantages of each share.

Curiosity—most precise scrutiny ; the most minute and scrupulous attention or examination.

5-6. **For . . . moiety**—The shares are so evenly balanced or are so carefully considered and adjusted that even the most careful scrutiny cannot find one to be superior to the other in the least degree.

6. **Moiety**—share, literally half, from the Latin '*medietas*'. Shakespeare uses the word in the sense of 'any portion'. *N.B.* It is not clear that Gloucester knew anything of Lear's intention to include Cordelia in the distribution of his

kingdom. In fact, in Gloucester's map, Cordelia's share does not figure at all.

9-10. **That now......to't**—I have become insensible to any sense of shame.

10. **Braz'd**—hardened by use.

11. **Conceive**—Kent obviously uses the word in the sense of 'understand'. Gloucester, however, puns on it in his next speech.

12. **Mother**—*N.B.* According to Coleridge, Edmund "hears of his mother and the circumstances of his birth, spoken of with a most degrading and licentious levity." Kittredge, however, argues that Edmund, though on the stage, does not hear this conversation.

15. **Fault**—Perhaps a pun on the two meanings of the word—(i) misdeed, and (ii) loss of scent by hounds. Shakespeare is found often comparing sin to a bad smell.

17. **Proper**—handsome ; comely. *N.B.* The word has been frequently used in this sense in Elizabethan English.

18. **By......law**—legitimately begotten. **Some year**—about a year ; a year or so.

19. **Account**—estimation ; reckoning.

20. **Knave**—fellow ; not implying moral disapproval. **Something saucily**—*N.B.* Moberly comments : "Gloucester's joking here at Edmund's bastardy, without any shame for his own fault, or thought of the danger of stinging the young man to anger and jealousy of his brother, Edgar, finds its due compensation in the disasters which it brings on him."

28. **My......Lordship**—*i.e.*, My services are yours to command. It is often an expression of courtesy to a superior.

30. **Sir......deserving**—I shall strive my best to deserve the honour of being better known to your Lordship.

31. **Out.**—*N.B.* Edmund has been sent abroad, owing to there being no career for him at home in consequence of his illegitimate birth and hence pursuing his fortunes, where no one could know that he was so born.

Stage Direction : **Sennet**—A particular set of notes on the trumpet or cornet, sounded either at the entrance or exit of a company or a procession.

N.B. With the entrance of the King, the tone naturally changes and conversational prose gives place to verse.

33. **Attend**—wait upon them and usher them into our presence.

35. **I shall**—*i.e.*, I am bound to ; I am sure to ; used in the replies of inferiors to superiors.

36. **Our......purpose**—our more secret intention, *i.e.*, of the plan to give the best share to the daughter, who loves us most.

N.B. The councillors only know of Lear's intention to divide the kingdom and of the shares designed for Goneril and Regan.

"We have already made known in some measure our desire of parting the kingdom. We will now discover, what has not been told before, the reasons by which we shall regulate the partition." —Johnson.

38. **Our fast intent**—our fixed intention ; unalterable resolution.

40. **On......strengths**—on those who are comparatively stronger and better able to bear the responsibilities of the State, younger as they are.

43. **Constant will**—fixed purpose ; seems to be a confirmation of 'fast intent' (line 38).

44. **Our......dowers**—the respective portions we have earmarked to dower on each of our daughters.

45. **Prevented now**—forestalled right now.

46. **Great rivals**—rivals, who are both great in their respective ranks.

47. **Amorous sojourn**—staying in our court with a view to win Cordelia's love.

48. **Here......answered**—shall shortly be present to receive their answer.

49. **Both**—Shakespeare often uses 'both' to denote more than two nouns.

50. **Interest**—possession, in the present legal connotation.

53. **Where......cballenge**—"Where the claims of merit are superadded to those of nature (*i.e.*, birth) ; or where a superior degree of natural filial affection is joined to the claim of other merits."—(Stevens). **With**—joined or superadded. **Challenge**—to make title to ; claim as one's right.

55. **I......matter**—more than what I can express in words; "the matter being too weighty to be conveyed in mere words."
—(Wright.)

56. **Space and liberty**—*N. B.* Space expresses the idea of freedom from confinement ; liberty, however, adds the idea of personal freedom in action. Schmidt suggests—

Space : the realm of external appearance, eye-sight ; the capacity to apprehend ; and, liberty : the freedom to enjoy it.

57. **Valued**—estimated.

60. **Poor**—insufficient. **Unable**—inadequate.

61. **Beyond......much**—Beyond all assignable quantity. I love you, beyond limits, and cannot say, it is 'so much', for how much soever I should name, it would yet be more".
—(Johnson).

"Beyond all these comparisons by which Goneril sought to measure her love." —(Wright.)

63. **Silent**—reticent. *N.B.* After having listened to the crafty and flattering speech of her sister, Cordelia thought that the handsomest thing, she could do, was to love and be silent.

65. **Shadowy**—shady. **Champions rich'd**—enriched with unwooded, fertile plains.

66. **Plenteous rivers**—rivers, conducing to plenty, therefore fertilizing. **Wide-skirted meads**—extensive meadows.

69. **Dearest**—very dear. *N.B.* The superlative, however, does not suggest that Lear's love for Regan is more than what it is either for Goneril or for Cordelia.

70. **Self**—same.

71. **And......worth**—*N. B.* Kenneth Muir has referred to three various explanations :

(i) I estimate myself her equal in the amount of affection for you ;

(ii) I estimate my love as equal to her's ; and

(iii) Value me (imperative) the same as her.

72. **She......love**—she accurately describes my love.

73. **That**—in that, for that.

75. **The most......sense**—the finest degree of susceptibility can grasp or take in.

N.B. Four different interpretations have been given, *viz* :—

(i) Sense absolute ; sense in its perfection.

(ii) "The most delicately sensitive part of my nature is capable of enjoying." —(Wright).

(iii) "The choicest estimate of sense." —(Moberly).

(iv) "Fulness or wealth of sensibility or capacity of joy." —(Hudson.)

76. **Felicitate**—to make happy.

79. **Not so**—*i.e.*, poor in words only, though not so in love.

80. **Ponderous**—*N. B.* So is the reading of Folio. The Quartos have 'richer'. Cordelia finds the gold of her heart, too heavy to be coined into words. Surely her heart has love of a better and weightier metal.

83. **Validity**—value ; worth.

84. **Our Joy**—so addressed, as she is the most favourite of Lear.

85. **The last, not least**—*N. B.* The Quartos read so ; the Folios have "our last and least". The least in the latter seems to suggest that Cordelia was small in stature. In Elizabethan, plays 'last, not least' is a regular phrase. Verity observes—"The objection, I think, to 'last and least', is that it would at once suggest the proverbial 'last and least' and to take a proverbial phrase, alter its form by one word and give it an entirely fresh sense is surely most confusing."

86. **Milk**—pastures. *N.B.* In ascribing Vines to France and not to Burgundy, perhaps Shakespeare thought of the pastoral countries of southern Belgium as forming part of Burgundy.

87. **Intressed**—closely connected ; concerned. *N.B.* 'Intressed' is the reading of Quarto ; Folio reads 'interest'.

88. **More opulent**—*N. B.* It suggests that Lear must assign Cordelia's share during his life, he being apprehensive that on his death she might receive equally with her sisters.

89. **Nothing**—The echoes of the word are heard throughout the play.

N.B. Coleridge's comment is brilliantly suggestive :—

"There is something of disgust at the ruthless hypocrisy of her sisters and some little faulty admixture of pride and sullenness in Cordelia's 'nothing', and her tone is well-contrived indeed to lessen the glaring absurdity of Lear's conduct but answers the yet more important purpose of forcing away the attention from the nursery-tale, the moment it has served its end, that of supplying the canvas for the picture."

92. **Nothing......nothing**—*N.B.* It is reminiscent of the Latin proverb "*ex nihilo fit*". Compare Act I, scene iv, line 130 (p. 160)—

"Nothing can be made out of nothing."

93-94. **I cannot......mouth**—my feelings are too deep to be expressed in mere words. *N.B. Cf. Ecclesiasticus*, XXI. 26 :

"The heart of fools is in their mouth ; but the mouth of the wise is in their heart."

95. **Bond**—filial obligation ; bounden duty.

96. **How, how**—*N. B.* The reiteration is suggestive of Lear's impatience as well as his petulance.

98-107. *Cordelia's Speech—N.B.* "Shakespeare, with wonderful naturalness, makes the shy and reserved Cordelia speak, when her false position is forced upon her, with a passion, that will not stop to choose conciliatory expression."
—(Moberly.)

100. **Return.....fit**—refers to the duties that are right and fit to be returned ; duties that are most fitting and mentioned in the following line *i.e.*, line 101.

104. **Plight**—troth-plight ; solemn pledge or promise.

107. **All**—*i.e.*, exclusively for you, so that no love could be spared for her husband.

112. **Let......dower**—*N. B.* Lear becomes suddenly outrageous and insane, as he utters these words. Bocknill supports this view—

"It (this curse) is madness or it is nothing. Not indeed raving, incoherent-formed mania, as it subsequently displays itself, but exaggerated passion, perverted affection, enfeebled judgment, combing to form a state of mental disease—incipient but still disease—in which man, though he may be paying for past errors, is during the present irresponsible."

112-124. *Lear's Speech—N. B.* This whole speech is a testimony of Lear's wild impulsiveness, bordering on insanity. He fails in understanding and weighing Cordelia's motives. Without leaving any hope of forgiveness, should she repent, he once for all flings her off for ever ('my sometime daughter'). To his long tried and trustworthy friend, Kent, also, he gives a similar treatment. Passion, innate and fostered by kingship, tends to become a disease, making him, almost irresponsible.

114. **Mysteries**—the secret rites. **Hecate**—The goddess of hell and witchcraft, as the patroness of the witches in "Macbeth".

115. **Operation......orbs**—*N. B.* The belief in planetary influence upon the life and death of mortals is in keeping with Edmund's speech, in the following scene ('This is excellent foppery etc.')

118. **Propinquity**—kinship. **Property**—closest blood relationship.

120. **From this**—from this time ; henceforth. **The........ Scythian**—a type of barbarism. 'Scythian' refers to an ancient nomadic people of Asia or one belonging to this race.

N.B. Herodotus tells us that the Scythians ate their aged and impotent relations, though eating of children by their parents is nowhere mentioned.

121. **Generation**—*N. B.* Editors, generally take 'generation' in the sense of 'offspring' or 'progeny', but Craig suggests the meaning, 'parents', as it better suits the context. **Messes**—portions of food.

123. **Neighbour'd**—be as warmly welcome to my heart.

124. **Sometime**—former ; formerly.

125. **Good......Liege**—*N.B.* Kent's opposition clearly displays Lear's moral incapability of resigning the sovereign power in the very act of disposing of it His intervention is of spiritual significance. As an embodiment of conscience, Kent would check Lear, when the latter committed sin. "Kent (is) the nearest to perfect goodness of Shakespeare's characters and yet the most individualized. His passionate affection. and fidelity to Lear acts on our feelings in Lear's own favour) Virtue itself seems to be in company with him."—(Coleridge.

127. **Dragon**—*N.B.* Lear may refer to the dragon of Britain which he would wear emblazoned on his helmet. Shakespeare frequently refers to the dragon as a symbol of savage ferocity. **Wrath**—the object of his wrath. *N. B* Lear's wrath, in a way, is an extension of his personality—indeed, a dragon can not be a dragon without his wrath.

128. **Set my rest**—*N.B.* It is a phrase, derived from the game of card called "Primero", and here used in double sense—

(i) Literally, in the said game, it signifies 'to stand upon the cards in one's hand'.

(ii) Metaphorically—it means 'to stake one's all', the 'rest' being stakes kept in reserve.

122. **Nursery**—tender care, nursing, *N.B.* Lear's original intention was not to live with each of his three daughters in turn. He intended to live with Cordelia but was forced, by what he thought to be her breach of duty, to adopt an altogether a different plan. **Hence......sight**—*N.B.* There are two opinions, in regard to the question, whom these words were addressed—

(i) They were addressed to Kent, whose banishment is pronounced by the King in an elaborate and formal style later in lines 174-85 of this scene, and

(ii) These words were addressed to Cordelia, who had raised her father's wrath to the highest pitch.

Lear's anger towards Kent has been very well contrasted with his rage against Cordelia, whom he loved so passionately and wounded her so outrageously.

131. **Who stirs?**—*N.B.* The courtiers seemed reluctant in obeying so reckless a command. They were horror-struck at

Lear's sudden outburst of fury, motionless, while thinking of Cordelia's impending doom.

133. **Digest**—incorporate.

134. **Let......her**—Let pride, which she impudently thinks to be 'plainness', alone be her dowry to win a husband.

136. **Large effects**—splendid accompaniments of rank and attributes of royalty, as manifestation of power.

137. **Troop with**—are associated with.

138. **Reservation**—The term, in its legal connotation, means the action or act of reserving (for oneself or another) some right, power, or privilege.

141. **Additions**—honours, titles, or the ceremonial observances, shown to royalty.

142. **Of the rest**—all other royal prerogatives, regal offices and duties, which Lear did not enumerate.

144. **Coronet**—Delius has referred to the difference between 'crown' and 'coronet', the latter denoting a ducal crown and not the royal diadem. No such distinction, however, could be maintained here.

148. **Drawn**—extended to the full length, as in drawing a bow. **Make......shaft**—avoid ; stand aside from the way of arrow's discharge.

149. **Fork**—the barbed arrowhead.

153. **When......flattery**—When those endowed with power bow down before the flatterers.

154. **Reserve......State**—retain thy royal dignity and power. *N. B.* Lear's folly lies in his surrendering of revenue, of sway and of the crown itself. It is but power bowing to flattery and 'hideous rashness' on his part.

155. **In......consideration**—considering (as against the rashness of his first thoughts) everything seriously and anxiously, as "Second thoughts are best."

156. **Answer......judgment**—"Let my life be answerable for my judgment ; or I will stake my life on my opinion.

159. **Reverb**—reverberate. **Hollowness**—concavity and insincerity.

161. **Held**—considered. **Pawn**—pledge, something to be pawned, if necessary.

163. **Safety**—well-being. His personal safety is not referred to here. **Motive**—the moving cause.

165-66. **Let..... eye**—"See better, says Kent and keep me always in your view."—(Johnson.)

N.B. Kent implies that he is the wise counsellor, to whom the King should look for advice from time to time.

166. **Blank**—the white mark in the centre of the target, at which the arrow is shot.

167. **Apollo**—The sun-god of the Greeks and Romans. *N. B.* The pagan setting may be deemed as quite necessary to Shakespeare's conception of the story. **Now......King**—*N. B.* "Better is a poor and a wise child than an old and foolish King, who will no more be admonished."—*Ecclesiasticus*, IV. 13.

168. **Miscreant**—*N. B.* The word is frequently used to denote 'moral worthlessness', but here it seems to have been used in its original sense of 'misbeliever,' as Kent contemptuously refers to the gods.

172. **Vent clamour**—to make complaint; be regretful. *N.B.* Walker suggests that 'clamour' gives us an idea of wailing or lamentation.

173. **Recreant**—*i.e.*, to his vows of allegiance; one who proves deceptive in his allegiance.

175. **That**—seeing that; for that.

176. **Strain'd**—forced; unnatural; excessive. **Strain'd pride**—that pride which strains itself farther than it can safely go.

177. **Power**—enabling us to execute the sentence that we pronounced a little earlier.

178. **Which......bear**—*N.B.* "This line gives us key to Lear's hasty and impetuous character." **Place**—the position that the king occupies. —(Wright.)

179. **Our......reward**—*i.e.*, our royal authority being maintained.

N. B. "As a proof that I am not a mere threatener, that I have power, as well as will, to punish, take thy due reward of thy demerits." —(Malone.)

180. **Allot**—allow ; assign as a lot. *N. B.* With an intentional arrogance, Lear looks upon himself, as holding the destiny of his subjects in his hands, as if he were an earthly impersonation of Fate.

181. **Diseases**—discomforts, vexations.

N. B. 'Diseases' is the reading of Quartos. The Folios read "disasters". It may, however, be remembered that 'diseases' in the old language meant slighter inconveniences, troubles or distresses. With the five days' provision in hand, how could Kent face the disasters of the world ?

183. **Tenth**—*N.B.* P. A. Daniel reads 'seventh', the alteration in his view being required to preserve the sense of the passage.

184. **Trunk**—used contemptuously for body.

185. **Juptier**—"Shakespeare makes his Lear too much a mythologist ; he had 'Hecate' and 'Apollo' before."

186. **This......revoked**—*N.B.* It is said in an acrimonious and ironical manner, referring to Kent's "revoke thy doom" in line 171.

187—194. *Kent's Speech*—*N.B.* "After the storm comes the equanimity of Kent's rhymed lines." —(Craig.)

These lines sum up the saturation, pointing towards the moral.

187. **Thee**—used for 'thou', perhaps for euphonic reasons. See Abbot's "Shakespearean Grammar", § 212. **Sith**—since. **Thus**—so overpowered by your folly and despotic temper. **Wilt**—are determined to.

188. **Freedom .....here**—*N. B.* I think that this line paradoxically suggests of Kent's later decision to continue living disguise, which will restrict his freedom ("freedom lives hence") in Lear's kingdom, where he proposed to pass his time of exile ("Banishment is here").

191. **Large**—hollow and extravagant. **And......approve**—May your deeds vindicate your extravagant words !

192. **Effects**—deeds, as consequences of the words.

194. **He'll......new**—*i.e.*, while living abroad in exile he will punctiliously follow his innate habit and principle of speaking the truth, even at the cost of his life.

Stage Direction. **Flourish**—A blast of trumpets in order to herald the company of persons, in high rank.

195. **Here's**—A singular verb is frequently used, particularly where it is followed by subjects.

198. **Rivall'd**—competed for ; has been a competitor for.

198-199. **What......her**—what smallest dower will satisfy you, without which you will withdraw your suit of love.

199. **Present**—immediate, to be paid on the spot.

200. **Quest of love**—expedition of courtship.

203. **Tender**—offer.

206. **Did hold her so**—held Cordelia on the terms mentioned by you ; *i.e.*, while we loved her, we were prepared to give her a large dowry.

207. **Price**—her value in our eyes.

208. **That......substance**—The form, which is so small, endowed so little that it is worth anything ; "that substance, which is but little in appearance."

N.B. Lear, perhaps ironically refers to the blunt professions of Cordelia's sincerity.

209. **Our......piec'd**—displeasure will be the only dowry that she would carry to her husband. **Piec'd**—attached to it, in the form of addition, supplemented by.

210. **May......grace**—may, by its fitness, be considered pleasing in your eyes. **Like**—in its original sense means 'to please'. **Grace**—The titular address of a duke.

212. **I......answer**—being kept long on tenter-hooks, I know not what answer to make.

213. **Infirmities**—deficiencies ; disqualifications. **Owes**—owns ; has. *N.B.* Compare "The Tempest," Act I, Scene ii, line 406—"This is no mortal business, nor so sound that the earth owes."

214. **New-adopted......hate**—newly received into our hatred.

215. **Dower'd......curse**—our curse as the dower to be carried by her.

216. **Take......her**—accept her or reject her.

218. **Election......conditions**—How, on such terms, could the choice be made. In case, the alternative of taking or leaving is fettered by conditions such as these, acceptance would be almost impossible.

219-226. **Then......hers**—These lines clearly show the intensity of Lear's bitterness against Cordelia even to the extent of dissuading her suitor. His conduct here is a fine utterance of the truth that—

".........to be worth with one, we love
Doth work like madness in the brain."

219. For—*i.e.*, as for.

222-223. **I would...hate**—I feel sorry in following a course, so opposite to the love, offered by you. My compunction lies in so little reciprocating your good-will towards me, as to marry you to one, who is the object of my hatred.

222. **Make......stray**—depart so far from. "Wander so far from your love." —(Wright).

223-226. **Therefore...hers**—I therefore entreat your good-self to withdraw your love from her, so as to direct it towards something more worthy than a miserable creature, in owning whom the Nature feels ashamed.

N.B. The ellipsis of 'I' before 'beseech' is frequent in Shakespeare and hence the nominative cannot be doubted.

224. **T' avert......way**—withdraw your affections, so far placed on an unworthy creature and now find someone else, who better deserves them.

228. **Even but now**—only a moment ago. **Your best object**—the main object of your love ; most delightful to your eyes.

229. **Argument**—subject ; theme. **Balm**—solace ; comfort.

230. **Trice of time**—this instant of time.

231-232. **To......favour**—to strip Cordelia of the tokens of love, whereby she was invested a little earlier.

231-235. **Sure......taint**—Either she must have committed some inexplicably horrid act, or if she were not guilty of any such offence, the love, so magniloquently proclaimed by you for her formerly, must have been infected with some disease, after having undergone a process of decay. *N. B.* France did not hear the extravagant speeches of love made by Goneril and Regan in praising Lear.

234. **That......it**—which makes it monstrous. **Your...... affection**—your love, as professed by you earlier.

235-237. **Which .....me**—My belief in the monstrous crime of Cordelia would require of me (as I have had many a proof of her good and righteous character)—a faith, which reason alone, without being superadded by a miracle could not have implanted in my heart.

239. **If for**—even if you are full of wrath at me, because... **That glib......art**—that smooth fluency of hypocritical words, such as unsparingly used by my sisters, in making their professions of love.

240. **To speak......not**—which the speaker would not intend to translate into deeds.

N. B. It is surprising how hurriedly Cordelia speaks; though France had clearly shown his invincible faith in her virtues, Cordelia speaks eagerly, lest he should harbour any misapprehension about her.

241. **I'll .....speak**—in my case, speech will be preceded by performance.

242. **Vicious blot**—a blot, to stain my immaculate character, such as murder, unchastity etc.

N. B. Quartos and Folios both have the reading, 'murther or foulness'. Collier's emendation 'nor other foulness' does not seem adequately necessary.

243. **Dishonour'd step**—dishonourable deed.

245. **For which**—for the want of which.

241-245. **That you......richer**—I beg your Majesty to announce the truth to this audience that it is neither the monstrous and unnatural act like murder, nor unchastity, nor any dishonourable deed, which has forfeited me your favour, but the very lack of sycophancy and deceptive words. I, even thus denounced and lashed with unkindness, for the want of these traits, feel myself inwardly richer.

246. **Still-soliciting**—incessantly begging, cajoling. **Such a tongue**—which is habituated to wheedling and coaxing.

248. **Hath .....liking**—has ruined me, depriving me of your love and favour. *N. B.* Wright observes that the 'in' denotes the amount of loss, to be borne by her.

248-249. **Better thou......better**—*N. B.* The process of developing madness can be discerned. Bucknill's comment is worthwhile to be quoted here—

"All this is exaggerated passion, perverted affection, weakened judgment, all the elements, in fact, of madness, except incoherence and delusion. These are added later, but they are not essential to madness; and as we read the play, the mind of Lear is, from the first, in a state of unsoundness."

250-252. **A tardiness......do** ?—Nothing more than an innate reticence in proclaiming that love which, rising to the occasion, will best be shown in action.

251. **History**—an account of all that one has to do. "The communication of what is in the heart or inner life of man."
—(Schmide).

253. **What say you**—what will you have to......?

253-255. **Love's......point**—In the matter of love the innate worth of woman should be the significant point in her favour, because love, which is guided in its course by ulterior considerations, that have little to do with the main point, is far from being real; hollow and perverse.

256. **She .. . dowery**—endowed with virtues, as she is, she does not need any other dower for winning a husband.

259. **Duchess**—should be preceded by 'as'.

261-62. **So lost......husband**—You have lost the love of a father; even so you will forfeit the chance of me for a husband.

264. **Since......love**—since, what he calls love, is based on the shrewd consideration of dowry and material benefits.

265. **Most rich...poor**—*N. B.* The paradox is that Cordelia being destitute (as without the dower) is most rich in the beauty of character. Bible says—"As poor and yet making many rich; as having nothing and yet prossess all things."

268. **I seize upon**—I eagerly appreciate.

269. **Be it . ...away**—whatever has been rejected by others as worthless, shall be taken up by me as lawful.

270-71. **'Tis strange...respect**—Strange as it is, that their icy neglect should cause my love to kindle into a flame of fervent appreciation.

272. **Thrown......chance**—contemptuously flung at me to take or leave, as I like.

274. **Wat'rish**—*N. B.* As perhaps Burgundy belonged to the best water district of France; used contemptuously suggesting Burgundy to be watery, thin, cold, calculating rival, as against 'the hot-blooded France.'

275. **Unpriz'd precious**—quite precious to me, even though others could not appreciate her.

277. **A better where**—*i.e.*, a better place.

N.B. 'Here, a better where' are used as nouns.

279. **Nor......see**—resolving never to see her again.

281. **Benison**—blessing; benediction.

284. **The......father**—you, who are so invaluable in our father's eyes. "You, who are so naturally dear and precious to him."— —(Moberly.)

286-287. **Loath......named**—to call them by their right names, which would really express their loathsomeness.

288. **Professed bosoms**—professing affections. *N.B.* Cordelia seems to hint at her disbelief in her sisters' professions of love. "Cordelia commits her father to the love, which her sisters had professed, not to that which they really feel." —(Moberly.)

289-290. **Stood......place**—if he at all favoured me by listening to my words, I would recommend a much better shelter than what he would there, *i.e.*, with Goneril and Regan.

291. **So**—*i.e.*, having addressed these words to you.

292. **Us**—should be preceded by 'to'.

293. **Study**—anxious endeavour.

295. **At......alms**—as though bestowed upon as mere charity by Fortune. "When Fortune was doling out petty charities, not bestowing bounteous awards."—(Kittredge). **Scanted**—fallen short in.

296. **And......wanted**—you richly deserve to be treated unkindly (incurring the loss of your share in the kingdom), because of your own lack of affection and generosity for our father.

297. **Plighted**—complicated; intricate; figuratively 'dissembling'.

298. **Who......derides**—those who endeavour to conceal their faults under a show of virtue, are eventually sure to be scorned and ridiculed.

N.B. It is reminiscent of the proverb—

"He that hiddeth his sinnes, shall not prosper."

302. **Nearly appertains**—of deep concern ; closely, vitally concerns. **Will hence**—will depart hence: the verb of motion is omitted, as frequently with 'forth' hence, 'hither' etc.

306. **Age**—old age.

308. **With......judgment**—with what little discernment.

309. **Grossly**—obviously ; palpably.

301-324. *Conversation between Goneril and Regan—N.B.* It suggests that Regan is much less stronger than Goneril, the latter being endowed with originality of thought and power of initiative. Here Goneril sees the trouble and determines to face it. Regan merely echoing her sister's words, would like to "think further", at which Goneril throws her befitting rejoinder,

"We must do something and i' th' heat."

311. **Slenderly......himself**—imperfectly known his mind and purposes, with a poor understanding of his own drawbacks.

312. **The......time**—Even during the days while he enjoyed the best health of his mind.

313. **Rash**—impulsive ; hasty and hot-headed.

314. **Long-engraffed**—deeply ingrained by long habit ; "firmly embedded"—(Kittredge). **Conditions**—disposition ; temperament. *N.B.* Goneril's diagnosis is almost true.

315-316. **Infirm......years**—made more choleric (angry) by infirmity.

317. **Unconstant starts**—sudden whims, caprices ; fits of passion and temper. **Like**—likely.

319-320. **There......him**—He and France are even now busy in ceremonious farewells.

320. **Hit together**—jointly execute and act vigorously on a plan.

320-322. **If our......us**—In case our father continued to behave in the same whimsical manner, as at present, his surrender of kingdom in our favour would exasperate us in many ways. Let us join hands to consistently deal with his caprices and eccentricities of behaviour.

324. **I' th' heat**—promptly ; before it is too late ; 'Strike while the iron is hot.'

ACT I : SCENE II

Analysis. This scene brings us now before Gloucester's castle, where we find bastard Edmund bemoaning his wretched plight in the society and determining by surreptitiously overthrowing his legitimate brother, Edgar to succeed his father. At this juncture Gloucester enters, giving vent to his repercussion on the exile of Kent and the wrath of France. No sooner Edmund saw Gloucester than he thrust the letter (which he earlier wrote and at that moment held in his hand) into his pocket. After much seeming reluctance he lets his father read the letter, which purports to be from his brother, Edgar who in that invited Edmund to assist him in assassinating their father and thereafter to share his estate. Gloucestor is duped, whereupon Edmund promises to let the former be secretly present so as to overhear a conference between him and Edgar, discussing his (Edgar's) treacherous plans. Gloucester goes and thereafter Edgar enters. He too becomes an easy victim to the crooked contrivance of Edmund, who convinces him that their father, being provoked against him by some villain, was extremely wrathful at him and that he should keep himself away from his father's presence "until some little time hath qualified the heat of his displeasure." He further advised him to retire into his own lodging and to "go arm'd" if he thought to "stir abroad". Thus the bastard yet ambitious Edmund succeeds in duping a credulous father and a noble brother, to let his "practices ride easy".

Notes

1-22. *Edmund's Speech*. *N.B.* Edmund considers himself an avowed enemy of the society, that has made him suffer for his illegitimate birth. He resolves to seek "wild justice" of vengeance against the wrongs done to him. This reminds us of Iago, who out of his "motiveless, motive-hunting malignity" pleads his grounds of complaint against Othello. In fact, self-excuse becomes "the last infirmity" of villainy.

1. **Goddess**—'presiding goddess of my fortunes' : since Edmund is unnatural (*i.e.*, illegitimate) son, and not one "by order of law" (I. i. 19).

N.B. In considering Nature, as his patroness, Edmund seems to denounce the religion as well as the laws of human society.

1-2. **To thy...bound**—I shall follow your dictates and not those of law and custom, that have deprived me of what should be my natural right.

3. **Stand......custom**—allow myself to be victimized by the iniquitous custom.

N.B. "Why should I stand a passive victim to the blows of right custom and allow the prudish scruples of nations to disinherit me." —(Deighton).

4. **Curiosity**—scrupulousness.

N.B. "The nice distinctions, which the laws of nations make in defiance of nature and commonsense."—(Kittredge).

Deprive—disinherit.

5. **For that**—because. **Moonshines**—months.

N.B. The reason for Edmund's protestation is not only his illegitimacy but also his juniority as custom compels the younger to yield to the elder. In his essay "Of Envy", Bacon says—"Deformed persons, and eunuchs, and old men and bastards are envious."

6. **Lag of**—younger than ; born later than. **Why...... base ?**—Why, after all, should I be contemptuously called 'base-born', 'bastard'?

7. **When......compact**—when the dimensions of my body are as well put together and as well adjusted as those of Edgar's. **Dimensions**—proportions. **Compact**—put together.

8. **Generous**—mild, noble and lofty in thoughts. **My... ...true**—as true an image of my father.

9. **As......issue**—As the offspring of my mother, who boasts of being as chaste and honest a wife as any other. **Madam's**—used with a sarcastic emphasis, which is so frequent in Shakespeare.

12. **More composition**—better blended parts or qualities. **Feirce quality**—being more energetic.

13. **Dull...bed**—referring to the occupants of the marriage bed, and their relations.

14. **Fops**—dupes. *N.B.* not used in the modern sense of 'dandies'.

17. **Is to**—is felt equally towards.

19. **Speed**—succeeds in its object, for which it is written; produces its desired effect.

20. **Thrive**—plan, successfully implemented.

21. **Shall..... legitimate**—shall rise above, by overthrowing the legitimate.

N.B. Folio reads "tooth the legitimate". This emendation (*viz*., 'shall top the legitimate') was first suggested by Edwards in his "Canons of Criticism" and first adopted by Campbell.

22. **Stand...bastards**—Rise in the defence of the bastards, whom the world and society unjustifiably denounce.

23. **And...parted**—*N.B*. In the last scene, while France parts, he has not been shown in choler. Perhaps at the time of formal leave-taking, he should have done it, 'hot-blooded' as he was by nature.

24. **To-night**—last night. **Subscrib'd**—signed away his kingdom and authority ; not literally signed any document, but making a formal transfer of his property.

N.B. 'Subscribed' is the reading of Quarto. Folio has 'prescribed', meaning, 'confined within bonds'.

25. **Confin'd to exhibition**—made to restrict his expenses to a fixed allowance. *N.B*. The word 'exhibition' in the sense of allowance is still in vogue at the universities, where it means 'annual stipend'.

26. **Upon the gad**—hastily, without reflection ; as if goaded by a sudden impulse, as we say, 'on the spur of the moment'.

27. **So please**—if it so pleases ; it is merely a courteous form of address.

28. **So earnestly**—with such an eager enthusiasm.

32. **Terrible**—frightened ; terrified.

36. **Pardon me**—I may be excused from showing it you.

37. **All o'er read**—read over completely.

39. **Overlooking**—perusal, inspection.

N.B. Bradley considers the device of letter as quite unconvincing, raising two pertinent questions—

(i) Why should Edgar, living in the same house, communicate to Edmund through letter instead of in person ? and

(ii) Why should Gloucester be unfamiliar even with his son's handwriting ?

41. **Either to detain**—alike by retaining.

42. **Are to blame**—are such as to deserve blame.

45. **Essay......virtue**—trial or test of my virtue.

N.B. 'Essay' and 'taste' seem to have been taken from royal tables, where the food used to be tasted by an officer (appointed for this purpose) to make sure that the dishes served, were not poisoned.

46. **The......age**—as Schmidt explains, a hendiadys, for 'this policy of holding age in reverence.'

N.B. the word, 'policy suggests a clever trick on the part of the aged persons.

47. **The best......times**—youth ; the prime of our life ; the best years of our life which can provide us full enjoyment.

48. **Till...them**—until the time when our age can't appreciate and enjoy them.

49. **Find**—feel. **Idle and fond**—"weak and foolish"—(Johnson).

49-50. **I begin...tyranny**—I begin to feel that to be thus oppressed by the tyrannical restraint of an aged father is nothing but a miserable state of vain and foolish servitude.

50. **Who**—'for which', the antecedent really being the persons implied in the word, 'tyranny'.

50-51. **Who suffer'd**—who is capable of oppressing us, not because of his inherent power but only as we are quite tame and willing to submit to him.

51. **Suffer'd**—endured, permitted.

52. **Would sleep**—were to sleep.

57. **A heart...in ?**—a heart and brain, wherein to conceive it.

60-61. **Casement...closet**—the open window of my private apartment.

62. **Character**—handwriting, which is the usual meaning in Shakespeare.

63. **Matter**—purport ; substance.

63-64. **Durst swear**—I should be bold enough to swear.

64. **In... ..that**—seeing that the contents are not good. **Fair**—gladly.

65. **Were**—*N.B.* the use of subjunctive conveys emphasis.

66. **It**—*i.e.*, the handwriting.

69-70. **Has......business**—Has he any time earlier also endeavoured to find out what your views were on the subject.

72. **Sons......age**—sons, having attained maturity.

73. **Declin'd**—declined in years ; past their prime.

N.B. compare, "Othello" III, iii. 269—

"I am declined into the vale of years."

Should......to—should be under the guardianship of.

N.B. The parallelism with the Lear story is something remarkable.

74. **Manage his revenue**—implies that the old men should better not cling to power and possession, which they can very well entrust to their young sons.

76. **Abhorred**—abominable. **Detested**—detestable ; repugnant.

77. **Sirrah**—used in the sense of 'sir', particularly when one is in a state of anger or contempt. **Apprehend**—seize and have him brought before me.

82. **You .....course**—you will be pursuing a safe course. **Where**—whereas.

83. **Mistaking his purpose**—*i.e.*, as you may find out later on that you have mistaken.

83-85. **It would......obedience**—You acting in that way would injure your own honour and at the same time would utterly shatter all the filial obedience in him.

85. **Pawn down**—stake ; wager ; lay down my life as a pledge.

86. **Feel**—test. **Your honour**—a title, used in addressing a Lord in the time of Shakespeare.

87. **Pretence**—design ; intention. **To no......danger**—having no other dangerous intention.

90-91. **By...assurance**—by the evidence of your own ears.

91. **Have your satisfaction**—be convinced one way or the other *i.e.*, either of his innocence or of his guilt.

94. **Nor is not**—The double negative is emphatic.

96-97. **Wind......him**—steal into his confidence and know his real intention for my sake.

97-98. **Frame......wisdom**—tackle the matter in the way, which you consider to be the wisest.

98. **I would resolution**—I would rather renounce my rank and position for being fully assured either of his guilt or innocence. **Unstate myself**—surrender my rank and even fortune, *i.e.*, make even the greatest sacrifice.

99-100. **Convey......means**—manage the business, not only with all the secrecy but also with the adroitness, that the circumstances would permit me to.

N.B. 'Convey, implies the idea of executing a business with due secrecy and tact ; hence a euphemism for 'steal'.

101. **These late eclipses**—*N.B.* this provides a point of infernal evidence, which helps us in ascertaining the date of the play. Craig comments—"In Nov., 1605, a great eclipse of the sun was visible in England and this possibly was in Shakespeare's mind when writing the above ; just as the earthquake, which was felt in England in 1580, may have been in his mind when referring to the Mantua earthquake in 'Romeo and Juliet', I. iii. 23."

102. **Though...nature**—Though natural philosophy can give account of eclipses, yet the natural world of man is afflicted by the disasters that follow.

102-103. **Though...thus**—Though the laws of natural philosophy predict to account for such phenomenal occurrences by this explanation or that.

N.B. The faith in astrology was still rampant in those days, and Shakespeare's plays abound with such references. In fact, the belief in astrology survived long after Shakespeare's time.

103. **Thus and thus**—By giving this or that explanation.

N.B. Here contempt has been shown for these explanations of Science.

103-104. **Yet...effects**—Yet the natural world (*i.e.*, mankind as a part of the order of nature) finds itself imperilled by disas-

ters, such as wars, earthquakes, pestilences etc., which follow in consequence of these mysterious phenomena.

104. **The sequent effects**—*i.e.*, The effects that follow. **Falls off**—turns into hostility.

105. **Divide**—estranged ; taken opposite side in the quarrels. **Mutinies**—riots ; insurrections.

106. **Bond**—the well recognized bond of love and duty towards each other.

107-109. **The villain...child**—This wretched villainy of my son comes under the head of the prediction that the son shall be hostile to the father : and this deviation of the king from the natural instincts comes under the head of the foreboding that the father shall be at enmity with the child.

107. **Prediction**—*N.B.* Gloucester being superstitious does not require stronger reasons or evidence before holding his son guilty, whom he loves "so tenderly and entirely." He is naturally credulous and easy to be deceived. Edgar's supposed treachery for him is one of the "sequent effects" of the disorders in heavens and therefore accountable.

108-109. **Falls......nature**—goes against the instincts of Nature. *N. B.* The metaphor is from the game of bowls, the deviation of the bowl being called 'bias'.

109-110. **We...time**—We have lived down our best days.

110. **Machinations......treachery**—*N.B.* It probably refers to the Gunpowder Plot of the 5th Nov., 1605.

111. **Disquietly**—causing disquiet, trouble. *N.B.* In Shakespeare's time, it was supposed that the stars, by their evil influence, would affect not only a man's character at the outset of his life but also all his subsequent fortunes.

112. **It..... nothing**—not only that you will not lose anything but it will be a positive gain to you.

115. **Excellent foppery**—an extreme kind of stupidity, whereby the world cheats itself.

N.B. Foppery is not only folly but the folly that allows itself to be duped ; it is derived from the German 'foppen', which means 'to hoax'.

116-117. **Often......behaviour**—often the on sequences of our own extravagant indulgences.

116. **Surfeits**—natural evil result of the planets being quite powerful, at the time of our birth and hence influencing.

117. **Make......disasters**—attribute our disasters to.

119. **Treachers**—traitors. *N.B.* An old word, not uncommon in the day of Shakespeare. Compare, Beaumont and Fletcher, "The Captain", V. 4 : "Where art thou, treacher ?"

120. **By...predominance**—As a result of the planets being quite powerful, at the time of our birth and hence influencing our subsequent fortunes.

121. **Influence**—*N.B.* Shakespeare has used it only in regard to the power exerted by heavenly bodies : thus the modern sense of the word is a relic of this old astrological faith.

121-122. **All......in**—all that is evil in us ; in all our sinful indulgences.

122. **By......on**—*i.e.*, by a supernatural impelling or incitement.

123. **Whoremaster man**—pimp ; pander ; one who procures lgratificatians for the lust of others. **Goatish disposition**—ascivious nature.

124. **Compounded**—mixed ; had communion with.

125. **Under the dragon's tail**—*i.e.*, under the descending node of the moon's orbit ; led away by any idle or wild fancy.

126. **Ursa major**—The northern constellation also called the Great Bear.

127. **Lecherous**—lustful ; lascivious. **Tut** !—Foot ; 's foot, *i.e.* by foot ; Pooh, pooh.

128. **Maidenliest star**—the constellation, which might be most benign in its influence. **Bastardizing**—extra-marital conception.

130. **Pat**—just, when his presence is awaited ; in the nick of time.

130-131. **The catastrophe .....comedy**—*N.B.* A sarcastic reference to the playwrights of early English comedy, in which the conclusion apparently came on by chance, but exactly by

their contrivance, when it was wanted. The word 'catastrophe' literally means 'a sudden turn of misfortune.'

"Just as the circumstance, which decides the catastrophe of a play, intervenes in the very nick of time, when the action is wound up to its crisis and the audience are impatiently expecting it."—(Heath).

131. **Cue**—The last words or tail-end of a speech of the preceding speaker, to serve as an indicator to the actor who would come next, according to his turn.

Butler in his "English Grammar" traces it to "*Q*", a note of entrance for actors, because it is the first letter of 'Quando' ('when'), showing when to enter and speak.

132. **Tom O' Bedlam**—"Tom's O' Bedlam, or poor Toms, or Bedlam Beggars or Abraham men, were sturdy vagabonds, who in the day of Shakespeare, were to be found in various parts of England." : (Dyce—"Glossary".)

In fact due to the asylum for lunatics in Bethlehem Hospital being overcrowded, many patients were discharged even before they were fully cured. These vagabonds took advantage of the situation by counterfeiting madness in order to enlist the sympathy of the charitables.

"Thanks to Edmund's treachery. Tom O' Bedlam is yet to be Edgar's cue."—(Nichol Smith.)

133. **Divisions**—Estrangements and family quarrels. **Fa .....mi** *N.B.* These musical notes may have been suggested to Edmund by the word, 'divisions', which had the sense of musical modulation. Perhaps Edmund is merely singing to himself in order not to seem to observe Edgar's approach. Burney suggests that Edmund speaking of the late eclipses as portents and prodigies, compares the dislocation of events, the times being out of joint, to the unnatural and offensive sounds 'Fa' sol, la, mi'.

137. **This ..day**—the other day ; only a day or two ago. **Should**—would inevitably.

138. **Do that**—Is it not strange enough that man like you should at all bother to attend towards such matter ?

139-140. **I...unhappily**—I can certainly tell you that his (*i.e.*, the author of these predictions) forecasts are coming ou true only with too unfortunate an accuracy.

140-147. **As of... . come, come**—*N.B.* Quartos have these lines, whereas Folios omit them. They seem to have been interpolated by an alien hand. Schmidt points out that there are in it no less than six words, which Shakespeare elsewhere did not use, *viz.*, unnaturalness, menace (as a noun), malediction, dissipation, cohorts and astronomical.

143. **needless diffidences** - suspicions ; cases of unreasonable mutual distrust.

144. **Dissipation of cohorts**—If at all it means anything, it "must mean mutinous behaviour in troops", perhaps referring to Gloucester's words "in cities' mutinies"—(Deighton).

146. **How ..... anstronomical ?**—Since when have you been a disciple of astrological teaching ?

154. **Bethink**—call to mind ; recollect.

155. **At... . presence**—now as I beseech you, avoid meeting him.

156. **Qualified**—mitigated ; modified : cooled.

157-158. **That...allay**—His wrath is so great that it would not by appeased, even by inflicting any injury to your person.

169. **Some wrong**—*N. B.* the situation is ironical, as who but Edmund should be the villain, responsible for wrong done to Edgar.

160-161. **I...forbearance**—Please restrain your feelings and avoid every chance of meeting him.

163. **Fitly**—opportunely ; conveniently ; in such a way that without any risk you are able to judge his attitude towards you and thus ascertain the truth of what I have said.

166. **To the best** - as it is best for you.

167. **If...you**—if his intentions are in any way good towards you.

168-169. **But it**—merely in faint outline, without colouring the picture in its horrors.

169. **Image and horror**—horrible truth or reality ; an exact description would fill you with horror. *N.B.* A hendiadys for 'horrible image in 'image and horror'.

170. **Anon**—presently ; shortly.

171. **I...business**—'You should feel assured that your interests are quite safe in my hands and whatever I do, shall only further them so as to be conducive to your safety.

174-175. **On...easy**—whose simplicity and straightforwardness of nature, my crooked contrivances would find easy to guide.

175. **Practices**—intrigues ; plots. **I see the business**—my way is clear to me, there being no hazards.

176. **Wit**—ingenuity ; by surreptitious designs.

177. **All...fit**—"To me nothing comes amiss, that I can shape to my own purposes.

ACT I : SCENE III

Analysis. Goneril complains of her father's eccentric and petulant behaviour, reproaching them "on every trifle's and creating a wanton commotion in the whole house. It appears that the King had struck one of her gentlemen-in-waiting for chiding his Fool. She wants that her steward Oswald and his other companions should show greater apathy and slackness than formerly in attending on the King, whom she calls an "idle old man". She wants the state of affair to reach a crisis, whereupon she would speak her mind to the King, who if disgruntled may better go hence to her sister, Regan. Goneril proposed to write to her, advising her to follow the "very course", as she herself did, and thus to assist her in effectively dealing with the wild caprices of the old man.

Notes

1. **Did...Fool ?**—*N.B.* It is easy to understand how the ceremonions gentleman-in-waiting would not endure the affronts of the Fool. It is surprisingly significant that the Fool should be the immediate cause of the troubles that Lear would have to undergo. We should now say, either "for chiding the Fool" or "for the chiding of his Fool".

3. **Ay, Madam**—*N.B.* The character of Oswald is well contrasted with that of Kent. Coleridge observes, "The steward (Oswald) should be placed in exact antithesis to Kent, as the only character of utter irredeemable baseness in Shakespeare. Even in this the judgement and invention of the poet are very much observable ; for what else could the willing tool of a Goneril be ? Not a vice but this of baseness was left open to him.

4. **By day and night**—always ; at all times.

5-6. **He...dds**—Even on trivial matters, he bursts out into violent fits of temper, making the confusion worse confounded.

5. **Flashes**—*N.B.* The word refers to the impetuosity and unconstant starts in Lear.

7-8. **Upbraids...trifle**—provoked by the slightest cause, begins to severely reproach us.

10. **If...services**—it would be much better if you show greater apathy and slackness than formerly, in carrying out his commands.

11. **I'll answer**—I will be responsible for.

13. **Put...please**—Assume, as much as you like, an appearance, expressive of your being so tired of his services that now you do not bother to readily attend on him.

14. **I'd question**—Let things come to such an extent that he may want me to explain for your negligence. Let this unsatisfactory state of affairs reach a crisis and then I will show him a little of how I feel in regard to the matters.

15. **If...it**—if he should have reason to be dissatisfied with the consequence. **Let...sister**—let him go hence to my sister. *N.B.* The verb of motion is omitted.

16. **I know**—*N. B.* Goneril's conversation with Regan at the end of the first scene is the source of this knowledge.

17. **Not . over-rul'd**—*i.e.*, we are no more willing to be dictated by his wild caprices. **Idle**—foolish.

18-19. **That still...away !**—Who, still persistently desires to exercise those privileges, of which he divested himself, by surrendering them in our favour.

20-21. **Old fools...flatteries**—These foolish old men, affected by their dotage, are no better than babes and they must be treated as such by being humoured with flatteries, and checked when they are deceived with them.

21. **With...flatteries**—*i.e.*, with as much checks as with flatteries.

24. **Have...you**—be treated with less warmth and alacrity than formerly, by you as well as by your fellow-servants.

25. **What......matter**—don't trouble yourself as to what consequences may follow, *i.e.*, leave them to me. **So**—to that purpose.

26-27. **I would......speak**—My aim in asking you to behave in this manner is to afford myself a chance (in his complaints) of speaking out my mind on the subject and such a chance I shall gain in this way.

28. **My very course**—exactly the same course, which I have followed.

ACT I : SCENE IV

Analysis. Kent, in disguise, manages to become a servant of King Lear. His tripping of Oswald's heels, for showing his disrespect to the King, as instructed by Goneril, was but a sound testimony of his earnestness and enthusiasm to serve his master, Lear. The much-awaited Fool comes on the stage with his quiver full of the shafts of sallies and gibes. He sarcastically points out the folly of Kent in "taking one's part that's out of favour." In his usual whimsical manner, he calls Lear a "bitter fool" and drives home to him his mistake in making "thy daughters thy mothers." The entrance of Goneril silences him. She now proceeds to severely reproach Lear for his insolent and riotous retinue, making his house, instead of a dignified palace, a tavern or a brothel. Thereafter she proposes to reduce his train of knights in number, at which Lear is shocked and calls her a 'degenerate bastard', wanting his horses and knights to be ready for proceeding towards the abode of his another daughter, Regan. Albany comes and shows his utter ignorance about what has been happening. Lear pours out his imprecations on Goneril and eventually sets off towards Regan's residence. Albany, left alone with his spouse, remonstrates a little against her ill-treatment of the King, whereupon she silences him and then asks his steward, Oswald, to carry her letter to Regan, fully explaining her, her "particular fear" about the matter.

Notes

If......defuse—If I borrow a voice, other than my own natural one, so as to disguise it.

2. **Defuse**—disorder and so disguise it, *i.e.*, the tone, not the meaning.

N.B. "We must suppose that Kent advances looking on his

disguise. 'To diffuse speech' signifies to disorder it and so disguise. It may, however, mean to speak broad with a clownish accent."

2—4. **My......likeness**—The good purpose, which led me to disguise, *viz.*, to attend on my King and master more effectively, may be fully realized.

3. **Carry**—reaching the mark ; probably an allusion to an arrow, carrying to the mark.

4. **Raz'd**—blotted ; erased.

5. **If......condemn'd**—If you can manage to serve him who has condemned you to exile.

6. **So......come**—so it may happen that way.

7. **Full of labours**—most zealous in service ; "His master will find him ready for any hard services and any number of them."—(Capell).

8. **Stay**—wait ; to be kept on waiting. **Jot**—moment ; the smallest quantity of anything, here of time.

9. **Thou**—commonly used while addressing the inferiors.

11. **What ...profess ?**—What are you capable of doing ? What is your profession ? *N.B.* Kent, while replying, plays on the word, taking 'profess' to mean 'assertion'.

14. **Put......trust**—Trust me with any business, however important it might be.

15. **Converse**—to keep company with ; associate ; this being the usual sense in Shakespeare.

16. **Judgment**—"the last judgment" — (Moberly). **When......choose**—when I can not help it ; when I have no alternative to fighting.

17. **To...fish**—Probably refers to the Roman Catholic practice of eating fish on Fridays and therefore "to be no Papist," but a loyal Protestant, as Kent would be. Capell suggests, "Kent was a jolly fellow and no lover of such meagre diet as fish."

21. **For a subject**—in your capacity as a subject.

24. **Who**—whom, as in the interrogative phrases such as 'Who did you see ?'

27. **Countenance**—bearing, not merely 'face'.

32. **Keep...counsel**—can keep a secret faithfully.

33. **Curious**—complicated ; subtle ; one required to be skilfully narrated.

32-33. **Mar...it**—spoil an elaborate and elegant story in relating it.

37. **To love**—as to love.

38. **To dote**—to be foolishly fond of, as often an old man would be.

42. **Ho**—hoa, a call to excite attention, *e.g.*, stop, hold, repetition being expressive of derision. **Knave**—servant ; boy ; fellow.

45. **So please you**—Oswald is carrying a conventional form of apologising, "excuse me", acting as instructed by Goneril. His entrance, in a free and easy manner, was meant to be offensive to Lear.

46. **Clotpoll**—blockhead ; a lubberly fellow.

49. **Mongrel**—cur ; a wretched follow ; properly a fellow of mixed breed.

53. **Roundest**—plainest ; without least attempting to conceal his rudeness.

58. **As...wont**—with which you were earlier accustomed to be treated.

59. **Appears**—which is visible.

63-64. **For......wrong'd**—*cf.* Kent's words (I. i. 152) "Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak."

63. **My duty**—*i.e.*, I, in my duty.

65. **Thou......conception**—you are reminding me of what I myself had already thought. **Conception**—idea ; suspicion. "Always used by Shakespeare in a bad sense, especially of suspicious or jealous thought."—(Schmidt.)

66. **Most faint neglect**—imperceptible but great coldness and want of proper attention ; "dull, languid, cold without zeal."—(Schmidt). Furness rightly points out, "Att his stage of this play, Lear is not the man to stand, 'most cold neglect', as we see by his instantaneous wrath at Oswald, a few lines further on."

67. **Jealous curiosity**—nicety of observation ; "a puncti-

lious jealousy, resulting from a scrupulous watchfulness of his own dignity."—(Steevens.)

68. **Pretence**—intention ; design.

69. **Where's my Fool ?**—The repeated demands of the King for the Fool, suggests of his profound love for him, which enables us to anticipate the liberty, which Lear would allow him.

70. **This**—these ; such use is common in Shakespeare. *Cf.* "Measure for Measure", I. iii. 21, "for this nineteen years".

71-72. **Since .....away**—*N.B.* By this delicate stroke, the dramatist gives us an insight into characters of Cordelia, Lear and the Fool. In fact, the fool wins our sympathy even beforehand. Coleridge observes : "The Fool (is) no comic buffoon to make the groundlings laugh, no forced condescension of Shakespeare's genius to the taste of his audience. Accordingly, he is prepared for being brought into the living connection with the pathos of the play. He is as wonderful a creation as the Caliban : his wild babblings and inspired idiocy articulate and gauge the horrors of the scene."

71. **Into**—Shakespeare uses frequently, preceding the names of the countries.

73. **No......that**—Lear is psychologically depressed. In his unconsciousness, haunts a remorse of the loss, caused to him by sheer impetuosity of his character.

74. **Would speak**—desire to speak.

79. **"My Lady's father !"**—Instead of properly addressing me with the title, 'King' (the title being specially retained by him) whyfore do you so impertinently speak of me as nothing more than your 'mistress's father'?

81-82. **I...pardon**—I beg to be pardoned for telling you so. *N.B.* These words are uttered with formal courtesy mingled with contemptuous expression of face, which infuriates the King.

83. **Do...me**—answer my scornful looks so impertinently. **Bandy**—exchange.

84. **Strucken**—struck.

85. **Nor tripp'd neither**—I assume that you will refuse to be tripped, as one trips up an opponent at the game of foot-ball.

Base...player—The Elizabethans did not consider football as significant a game as hawking, tennis, fencing etc. In the streets of Cheapside, the idle boys would often play football, causing a great nuisance to the citizens.

88. **I'll...differences**—I will teach you your position and let you appreciate the difference between a king and wretched servant like yourself.

89-90. **If you...tarry**—If you wish to be knocked down once again then stay a little, otherwise be off.

89. **Measure**—by lying your full length.

90. **Go to**—expressed contemptuously or indignantly, sometimes as an exhortation. **Have you wisdom** ?—If you are wise enough, be off instantly.

92. **Earnest**—earnest money, as a token for being engaged in the services.

93. **Coxcomb**—Literally, "the comb or crest on a cock's head ; the cap, which a professional fool wears. It has a piece of red cloth, sewn upon it, like the comb of a cock, with ass's ears and cock's crest ; the cap being originally designed to be a mocking copy of the monk's cowl.

N.B. Fool by throwing the shafts of his sallies insists on the king to resume power, but later his efforts being ineffective he resorts to simple mirth and geniality to distract his master from the sorrowful agonies.

94. **How...thou** ?—What the knight earlier spoke of the fool : ("hath much pined away") prompts Lear to put this question.

95. **You were best**—it would be best for you.

N.B. This idiom is an instance of impersonal construction, changed into a personal one. Thus it should be in its grammatical form "I were best."

96. **Why fool** ?—Folio wrongly assigns it to Lear.

97. **One's part**—"We never use the possessive inflection of the unemphatic 'one' as an antecedent."—(Abbott—§ 81.)

98. **And thou...sits**—If you can not adjust your smiles in accordance with the changing fortunes of men ; *i.e.*, if you have not learnt how to become an opportunist.

N.B. 'And' is a common variant of 'an', which means 'if'. 'Sits' refers to blowing from a certain quarter ; *cf.* the similar phrase, 'which way the wind blows'.

99. **Catch cold**—*i.e.*, be turned out of the doors, exposing yourself to the inclement vagaries of weather.

100. **Banish'd......daughters**—The apparent meaning is that Lear had made Goneril and Regan independent and hence lost their love as well as obedience, but the Fool deliberately uses the word "banish'd" to sarcastically glance at the King's treatment of Cordelia. *N.B.* A comic inversion of facts. **On's**—on his.

101. **A blessing......will**—By cursing and denouncing Cordelia 'a stranger', Lear, though unintentionally, made her a queen of France, saving her from being wedded to "wat'rish Burgundy."

102. **Nuncle**—It is a contraction of "mine uncle," as 'naunt' of 'mine aunt'. The licensed Fool or Jester usually addressed his master as 'uncle'.

103. **Two coxcombs**—"to mark his double folly." (Wright.)

106-107. **There's .....daughters**—that he calls Lear a double-dyed Fool."—(Kittredge.)

108. **Take.. ...whip**—Although the Fool was licensed to enjoy freedom of speech, but whenever his tongue ran too freely and insolently, he would be whipped.

109. **Must to kennel**—must be off to his kennel.

110. **Lady the brach**—Steevens adopts this reading ; the Folio has "the Lady Brach" ; the Quarto reads 'Ladie O' the brach'. The slight change seems to have been suggested by Henry IV (1), III. i. 240. "I had rather hear Lady, my brach, howl." In Irish. Lady is a common name for a hound, brach a female hound, here as a contrast to dog.

"It has been implied that truth is a dog of low social status —the Lady Brach is pictured as of high social status."—(Duthie). Muir suggests an antithesis between truth and flattery and not between truth and falsehood. Cordelia is truth ; Goneril and Regan are flattering bitches.

112. **A......me**—Oswald's impudence may still irritate his mind. "A plague, take me for my folly", in having banished Cordelia. The Fool's words hit him hard and that he allowed

himself to be deceived by flatterers, torments him. **Gall**—anything bitter.

116. **Have......showest**—Let your wealth that you possess, be more than what you parade before the world.

117. **Speak......knowest**—Observe reticence, and don't tell others all that you know.

118. **Lend......owest**—Don't lend more than what you yourself possess.

119. **Goest**—walk.

120. **Learn...trowest**—Don't complacently confine your store of knowledge to the hearsays, you take on trust. Let your beliefs be over-weighed by your real knowledge. Don't believe all you hear, unless and until you ascertain the truth of it. **Trowest**—believe ; literally 'to hold true'.

121. **Set......throwest**—Let all of your winnings be not staked at a single throw ; stake lower than the chances of winning at your game.

123. **In-a-door**—indoors.

124-125. **And......score**—The Fool instead of concluding by saying that, following these precepts, anyone would increase his savings, ends in nonsense.

126. **This is nothing**—This is sheer nonsense.

N.B. Quarto assigns this speech to Lear ; the Folio attributes it to Kent.

127-128. **Then 'tis...for't**—you have not paid me anything and hence you should hardly expect from me anything worthwhile in the same way, as when you would expect an opinion from a lawyer, without having paid his fees.

130-131. **Nothing......nothing**—It reminds us of what he earlier spoke to Cordelia, I. i. 92. "Nothing will come of nothing." He never bothered to think whether he could apply the maxim in his own case. The Fool indicates it to him.

134. **A bitter fool**—a sarcastic fool.

138. **That lord**—*N.B.* Perhaps Shakespeare had in his mind Skalliger, a lord in the old play, who advised Lear about the division of the kingdom. Kittredge, however, maintains that the Fool implies that nobody gave Lear such an idiotic advice.

141. **Do..stand**—impersonate him ; do you represent him.

143. **Presently**—immediately ; at once.

144. **Motley**—the parti-coloured dress of the fool ; covered with spots of different colours.

146. **Call me fool**—as is implied by what you say.

148. **Thou...with**—The Fool audaciously suggests that Lear was a born fool.

150. **No...me**—The Fool takes 'altogether Fool', not in the sense of 'entirely a fool', but "one, who has all the folly that there is." **Let me**—leave me in the sole possession of folly, so as to spare no folly for others.

151. **Had...out**—*i.e.*, to be the only licensed fool ; by a monopoly granted.

N.B. Despite the Declaratory Act against monopolies, passed at the end of Elizabeth's reign, they were granted to needy courtiers by James I, and this made people clamorous. Shakespeare is satirical on the gross abuses (giving rise to corruption and avarice), of monopolies of that time.

153. **They'll be snatching**—the ladies too would be scrambling for their share.

155. **What...be ?**—The answer to the Fool's riddle is quite obvious, even then Lear is deliberately acting as a stupe.

159. **Thou...dirt**—"You acted as foolishly as if, instead of riding through the dirty roads on your ass, you had dismounted and taken the animal on your shoulders to save his feet from being dirtied."—(Deighton.)

N.B. The Fool alludes to the well-known Æsop's fables of the man, his two sons and the ass. Warner in his "Albion's England" retold it.

160. **Bald**—used contemptuously, so as to mean 'foolish', 'empty'.

161-62. **If I...it so**—Among the various explanations, one given by Eccles is quite convincing :

"The Fool was accustomed to speak bitter and unpalatable truths, and has sometimes been chastened for doing so. 'If then', he says, 'I speak on this occasion like myself—*i.e.*, like a fool, foolishly, let not me be whipped, but who just finds it be

as I have said' ; *i.e.*,—the king himself, who was likely to be soonest sensible of the truth and justness of the sarcasm, and who, he insinuates, deserved whipping for the silly part he had acted."

163-166. **Fools had...So apish**—Johnson thus explains—"There was never a time when fools were less in favour than now, and the reason is they were never so little wanted, for wise men now supply their place.

163. **Grace**—favour.

164. **Foppish**—foolish.

166. **Apish**—fantastical.

169. **I have......it**—It has been my habit ; I have indulged in it as a hobby.

169-170. **Mad'st...mothers**—*i.e.*, by giving them the authority to punish.

172-175. **Then they...fools among**—It seems to be a snatch of an old song, perhaps slightly adapted to suit the occasion. The first two lines appear to be adaptation of an old ballad :

"Some men for sodayne joy do wepe
And some in sorrow sing."

174. **Play bo-peep**—amuse himself, indulging in childish pranks ; referring to the well-known nursery game. Here it implies that Lear has blinded himself, hidden himself (*i.e.*, by abdicating) or played some similar pranks.

186-187. **What...on**—Why do you wear that frown on your face.

186. **Frontlet**—frown ; properly a band for the forehead, worn by ladies either as an ornament or at night to remove wrinkles and render that part smooth. Goneril's frowning forehead implies that she had just seen Oswald and heard his report.

187. **I' th' frown**—given to frowning.

189-190. **An O......figure**—merely a cipher, without the value giving digit, placed before it.

191. **Nothing**—a nonentity. **Forsooth**—in truth ; certainly

192. **Your face**—*i.e.*, by its angry expression.

197. **Sheal'd peascod**—Shelled peapod, *i.e.*, a pod from which the peas have been taken out.

N.B. This refers to Lear, being once in full possession of sovereignty, but now reduced to an empty state like a pod, emptied of its peas.

"The outside of a king remains (in Lear) but all the intrinsic parts of royalty are gone: he has nothing to give."—(Johnson).

198. **Not only......Fool**—*N.B.* Goneril quite pragmatically would come straight to the point, brushing aside all the preliminaries and at once start complaining. Her complaint has been introduced very skilfully, *i.e.*, in immediate connection with the witticism of the Fool. **All-licen'd Fool**—to whom liberty is permitted to an extravagant degree.

200. **Hourly**—frequently ; every hour. **Carp**—find fault with the household management.

201. **In rank riots**—Goneril's complaint against Lear's train may be justified on the principle, "like master, like man." Lear treats her servants ill, setting before them his own example of fault-finding.

202. **I had thought**—suggests that Goneril apparently had remonstrated before.

203. **To have found**—hoping to have discovered.

204. **By what . done**—refers to Lear's treatment of Goneril's gentleman (I. iii. 1) and of Oswald, who was struck by Lear, a little earlier.

205. **Protect this course**—"throwing a shield of your sanction over this behaviour."—(Deighton.) **Put it on**—instigate it : stimulate.

206-207. **The fault...sleep**—For the first time in her life, Goneril, being deliberately torturous, threatens Lear in such an extravagantly sarcastic language.

208. **Which**—the remedial measure, to be adopted by me. **Tender**—strong desire of having a healthy state of affairs.

211. **Discreet proceeding**—prudent action.

208-211. **Which, in...proceeding**—This sentence, as Moberly points out, "labours under a plethora of relatives." It may thus be explained :

"If you should do so, your fault would not be allowed to go unreproved, nor should I be hesitant in redressing the wrongs

by checking your knights from being riotous. This disciplinary measure, prompted by my strong desire to have a healthy affairs of state, would be drastic. In normal circumstances, I should be ashamed of resorting to them. My measures must necessarily offend you and accuse me of lacking in filial duty, but in fact, they would be merely a prudential step, which the exigency of the moment imposes on me."

213-214. **The hedge-sparrow......young**—The young cuckoo turned on its foster-mother, hedge-sparrow, as Goneril turned on her father, Lear. Moberly connects Fool's couplet, which seems to have been proverbial, with Goneril's speech thus—"Yes," replies the Fool, "and so the young cuckoo, wanting the nest to itself, was under the regrettable necessity of bitting off the head of its foster-mother, the sparrow ; which under the circumstances was not a shame, but an act of discretion."

N.B. The court-fools of Elizabethan times were privileged jesters and satirists. Joshua Reynolds observes : "Shakespeare's fools are certainly copied from the life. The originals whom he copied, were no doubt men of quick parts ; lively and sarcastic. Though they were licensed to say anything, it was still necessary to prevent giving offence, that everything they said, should have a playful air; we may suppose, therefore that they had a custom of taking off the edge of too sharp a speech by covering it hastily with the end of an old song, or any glib nonsense that came into the mind. I know no other way of accounting for the incoherent words with which Shakespeare finishes the Fool's speeches."

It can not be ascertained, whether these rhymed bits, assigned to the Fool by the playwright, are quotations.

215. **So out...darkling**—This expression signifies the desertion of a man by his pecuniary friends, so as to reduce him to a miserable plight of pod, emptied of its peas. Shakespeare may have been reminded of an almost identical thought, described by Spenser, in his "Faerie Queene," Bk. II, X. 30.—

"But true it is, that when the oyle is spent,
The light goes out, and weeks is throwne away ;
So when he had resigned his regiment,
His daughter gan despise his drouping day."

Darkling—in the dark.

216. **Are...daughter ?**—Lear is neither wrathful, nor ironical here. He is extremely perplexed and stunned by the sudden

revelation of what his daughter is. A little after, his self-recovery restores the passion in him.

218. **Fraught**—equipped with ; stored ; filled.

219. **Dispositions**—moods ; temperamental fits. **Transport you**—entirely change you, your waywardness being increased since your resignation.

221-222. **May not...horse ?**—May not the stupidest person see when things have taken such a preposterous turn ; *i.e.*, when a daughter begins to issue instructions to her royal father ?

222. **Whoop...thee**—Seems to be a quotation from an old song. 'Jug' being a corruption of 'Joan' or 'Jane', a nickname or term of endearment. Here this signifies an ironical outburst of admiration.

225. **Notion**—mental powers ; intellect.

225-226. **Either...lethargied**—Either his mental powers are growing weak or his power of distinguishing the real from the imaginary has become torpid.

226. **Ha !...so**—Ha ! am I awake ? How can it be so ?

229-231. **I would...daughters**—I wish to make that fact—that I am Sear's shadow—clear to myself, because if I were to be judged by the marks of sovereignty, knowledge and reason, they all persuade me to think that I am Lear himself in flesh and blood and I have daughters—this notion is false, as now I am reduced to his shadow.

N.B. Lear would be relieved in finding himself a mere shadow, *i.e.*, he did not have daughters and no such monster as Goneril, would exist in reality.

232. **Which...father**—The Fool resumes his last speech, "Lear's shadow."

234. **Admiration**—affected astonishment ; pretended surprise.

234-235. **Much...pranks**—smacks in some degree of your other recent caprices.

236. **Purposes**—intentions of speaking to you in this manner.

239. **Disorder'd**—disorderly. **Debosh'd**—an old variant of 'debauched' ; lewd. **Bold**—impudent ; audacious.

241. **Shows**—appears. **Epicurism**—gluttony ; riotous living.

243. **Grac'd palace**—a palace, dignified by the presence of a sovereign and marked by a stately decorum. **Doth speak**—makes itself heard ; calls for, so as to demand.

244. **Be then desir'd**—be then requested ; comply with the regulations.

246. **Disquantity**—reduce in number ; cut down.

247. **Still depend**—still be your dependents.

248. **Besort**—befit.

247—249. **And the...and you**—Let the rest of your knights attend on you in a manner which is quite behaving your age and dignity, in conformity with your position as well as their own.

N.B. With characteristic calm, Goneril concludes.

253. **Yet...daughter**—Although you have proved to be so, I have still a daughter who will surely behave to me as a daugther.

254-255. **Disorder'd...betters**—The riotous crowd of your dependents treat as servants even those who in every way are their superiors.

256. **Woe...repents**—Woe to him, who realizes his mistake too late to be remedied. **Too late**—now that he has given away his power to his daughters.

257. **Is...will ?**—Is all, that has been happening, ratified by your will ?

260. **The sea-monster**—It is difficult to say what specific sea-monster is referred to here by Shakespeare. According to Upton, it is Hippopotamus. the symbol of ingratitude and impiety.

262. **Kite**—a term of reproach ; the kite being a bird of prey—here it is applicable to Goneril. Armstrong in his "Shakespeare's Imagination," suggests that the kite "is a despicable creature, symbolic of cowardice, meanness, cruelty and death."

263. **Choice and rarest**—choicest and rarest. "The superlative termination belongs to both"—(Wright.)

Cf. "Measure for Measure." IV, iv 13 :
"The generous and gravest citizens."

Parts—gifts ; talents.

264. **Particulars**—all the details, connected with their duties.

265-266. **And in...name**—And even in the minutest particulars they scrupulously maintain their dignity.

266. **The worships...nams**—The honourable dignity and reputation, which they have earned.

268-269. **Which, like......place**—Which like an engine so wrenched and twisted my natural disposition, as to make a hideous distortion of myself.

258. **Engine**—a rack ; an instrument of torture, sometimes used for stretching the body to extort a confession.

270. **Gall**—bitterness and malignity, such as was already in it.

271. **This gate**—his brain, which led him to misunderstand Cordelia.

272. **Dear**—precious ; which might have proved so valuable to him.

274. **Moved**—excited ; roused you to anger.

275. **It may be so**—"He is too much stirred to give a thought to Albany."—(Verity.)

276. **Hear !......hear !**—Lear kneels down in order to invoke the goddess of Nature in solemn prayers. He utters each word with a measured slowness so as to weigh it with the force of his curse. To pass from one mood to another is quite characteristic in Lear, in whom the dispassionate moments are soon followed by a hysterical incoherence in reaction, for which he has to strain every fibre of his being.

278. **This creature**—No longer his daughter.

281. **Derogate**—dishonoured ; degraded ; fallen from nobleness.

282. **Must teem**—is destined to be a mother.

283. **Child of spleen**—A child, consisting only of spite and malice.

N.B. Spleen is a soft, pulpy, blood-modifying gland near the large extremity of the stomach, supposed by the ancients to be the seat of anger and melancholy.

283-285. **That......to her**—that it may live to be perverse and unnatural and torture to her.

284. **Thwart disnatur'd**—perverse and unnatural ; devoid of filial affection.

285. **In her...youth**—in her brow, while she is still young.

286. **Fret**—eat away ; wear away.

287. **Her...benefits**—Goneril's maternal care and all her proofs of affection.

288. **To...contempt**—*N.B.* Hendiadys for 'contemptuous laughter'.

289. **A serpent's tooth**—It has become proverbial now. Malone compares, Psalm, cxl.3—"They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent," and adds "The viper was the emblem of ingratitude."

291. **Whereof comes this ?**—What is the reason for his bitter wrath ?

292. **To know**—about finding out.

295. **At a clap**—at one stroke. **Within a fortnight**—*i.e.*, in less than half of the stipulated period of his stay.

N.B. This illustrates a characteristic of Shakespearean art—his use of what is called double time. When he wants to show to his audience that a longer interval has passed, he puts into the mouth of his characters, words suggesting the long interval, as he does here. On the contrary, to show the rapid succession of events, he shows with a fine skill, words indicating short intervals—*e.g.*, Gloucester's—"And the King gone to-night" (I. ii. 24).

299. **Should make...them**—Should come from the eyes profusely as if you are worthy of them ; *i.e*, they are too precious to be wasted on wretched creature like yourself.

301-302. **Untented...about thee !**—May every organ of feeling in you be pierced by a father's curse, beyond all cure.

'Untented woundings' refer to wounds too deep to be cleaned by a roll of linen.

302. **Fond**—foolish.

303. **Beweep**—if you weep for ; *i.e.*, if you are foolish enough to weep for.

304. **Loose**—waste.

305. **Temper**—moisten.

306-307. **Another......comfortable**—*N.B.* There is an irony in Lear's reliance on Regan. We know that she too would follow the "very course" which her elder sister did.

307. **comfortable**—comfortable ; ready to give comfort.

309. **Wolvish visage**—ravenour face ; *i.e.*, one which devours with rapacity.

310. **Shape**—the shape of the King.

312. **Do you......that ?**—*N. B.* Goneril is quite familiar with the submissive nature of her husband, Albany. She uses Lear's threat of resuming his power as a means of instigating her husband to support her. When, earlier, he disapproved of her conduct (I. iv. 291), she cuts him short, advising him not to afflict himself with those matters. The difference of opinion between husband and wife in this scene is useful in so far as it foreshadows their ultimate relations. Though good-intentioned, Albany is weak and yielding and he is a contrast to his wife as well as Edmund (afterwards her lover).

313-314. **I cannot .....you**—I would not allow my great love for you to make me blind to your faults.

315. **Content**—be content, *i.e.*, as I know much better.

317. **Take the......the**—It has two meanings ; (i) Take me with you, and (ii) take the epithet 'fool' with you. Kittredge remarks that it was a regular farewell gibe.

320-321. **Should sure...halter**—Should surely be hanged only if I could exchange my cap for a halter.

321. **Halter**—a strong rope for hanging the criminals.

323. **This man......counsel**—I have given this man (*i.e.*, her father) good advice.

325. **At point**—in armed readiness prepared for any emergency.

326. **Buzz**—whisper ; rumour.

327. **He may......powers**—He may use these hundred knights to protect himself as well as to provide a shelter for his foolish fancies, strengthening his every childish humour. **Enguard**—protect.

328. **In mercy**—in its legal connotation, 'at his mercy' : the original Latin phrase, '*in misericordia*', is a legal phrase.

329. **Fear too far**—All your fears, as to what he might have done, carry you too far (*i.e.*, in her treatment of Lear).

331-332. **Let me......taken**—Let me always clear from my path the obstacles that jeopardize it, as I would not live under the prepetual terror of being caught into them.

331. **Take away**—remove from my path.

332. **To be taken**—as in a trap. **I know his heart**—I know what he can be up to. *N.B.* She remembers well what Lear said, while he departed (I. iv. 309-11).

334. **Sustain**—maintain.

335. **Th' unfitness**—the impropriety of doing so.

337. **What**—an expression of eagerness and impatience. **Writ**—written.

339. **Company**—companion. **Away to horse**—Ride quickly and at once be off on your journey.

340. **Full of......fear**—fully about my personal apprehension. It refers to Lear's threat (I. iv. 309), which obsesses her mind.

342. **Compact**—confirm ; to make compatible and complete.

344. **This milky......yours**—this mild and gentle way in which you would willy-nilly proceed.

345. **Under pardon**—I beg to be excused for saying so.

346-347. **You are...mildness**—Those who see this course of action, would blame you for your lack of wisdom, than praise you for your 'milky gentleness', which is bound to have bad consequence.

346. **Ataxt**—Taken to task ; blamed.

348. **How far**—into the future.

348-349. **How far...what's well**—seems to be proverbial.

351. **Th' event**—Let us wait to see how things turn out.

N.B. "Albany shrinks from a word-storm with his helpmate"—(Hudson).

ACT I : SCENE V

Analysis. Lear sends Kent to the city of Gloucester, with his letter to be delivered to Regan, warning him not to speak more than is necessary in answering queries, that may arise out of the letter, when she had read it over. The Fool wanted Lear to be disillusioned that Goneril and Regan both were equally sour-tempered. The gibes and sallies thrown by the Fool at Lear made him confess, with a strong sense of compunction, that he really had been unjust to Cordelia, "I did her wrong—." The first consciousness of impending insanity shook the very frame of Lear, who begged for Heaven's compassion : "Let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven!" The horses being ready, they commenced the journey towards the abode of Regan.

Notes

1. **Gloucester**—It refers to the city of Gloucester, where Duke of Cornwall and Regan resided. The castle of the Earl, too, was situated there. **These letter**—This letter ; as is suggested below by lines 3 and 6.

2-3. **Acquaint my...letter**—Don't tell my daughter, in regard to what has happened, more than is necessary in answering questions which may come from her perusal of my letter.

3. **Demand**—question ; queries. **Out of**—*i.e.*, as suggested by the perusal of my letter by Regan.

7. **Brain**—The Quarto and the Folio, both read 'brains' ; brain is the emendation of Pope adopted by Wright.

7-8. **If a man's...kibes ?**—If a man has no more wit than is necessary to go fast, may he not be a victim of chilblains ?

8. **Kibes**—chilblains ; a localised inflammation of the skin which occurs in cold weather on hands and feet, more rarely on ears or nose.

10-11. **Thy wit...slip-shod**—"You will never have to wear slippers because of chilblains, for you show you have no wit, even in your heels, in undertaking your journey to Regan." —(Muir.)

N.B. The fool but in a covert way suggests that Lear is brainless and hence he would not suffer from kibes (sores in heels), compelling him to wear the slippers.

11. **Slip-shod**—slippered ; in slip-shoes, as slipper were so called those days.

13. **Kindly**—used here with a play on the word—(i) affectionately, and (ii) after her kind, her nature.

14. **As like......apple** – *i.e.*, she differs from her sister only as a crab differs from an apple, both being alike in sourness.

N.B. The Fool suggests that Goneril and Regan both were equally sour-tempered.

17-18. **She will......to a crab**—just as sourly as her sister.

19. **On's**—on his.

21. **Of either...nose**—on either side of his nose.

22. **He may spy into**—The Fool sarcastically suggests that Lear should have used his eyes to spy into the real character of his daughters.

23. **I did her wrong**—compunction and contrition rouse Lear, turning his thoughts to Cordelia, who had been present in his conscious or unconscious mind, ever since he denounced her a stranger.

29. **Put's head**—*i.e.*, put his head.

30. **Horns**—"The Fool does not mean to call Lear a cuckold ; he simply accepts horns as the inevitable adornment of married men."—(Kittredge.)

31. **I will......nature**—banish all thoughts of fatherly love and execute cruel vengeance. **So kind a father**—So kind a father that would receive a treatment such as this.

33. **Thy asses**—Your long-eared stupid servants.

34. **The seven stars**—the Pleiades, who are supposed to be the seven daughters of Atlas and Pleione, after death changed into stars. Furness suggests "the Great Bear". Milton in his "Paradise Lost", X. 674, calls them—

"The seven At'lantic sisters."

Pretty—apt.

38. **So take......perforce**—to think that she would forcibly take away those privileges, which she willingly granted me earlier.

Johnson suggests, "meditating on his resumption of royalty", *i.e.*, to resume possession of Goneril's share by force of arms and with the assistance of Cornwall and Regan. The phrase "monster ingratitude", which soon follows, makes this explanation less convincing.

41. **How's that**—wherefore ; for what reason.

44. **O ! let......mad**—The first premonition of his insanity strikes to him. His fear, which he hinted at in I. iv. 225-26, now begins to take more definite shape. That he is drifting towards madness, is a dreadful consciousness of the impending insanity in him. Whether he is mad or not, shall be determined by his daughters. He feels that they could make him insane, if they so wished. Later he makes an appeal to her (to Goneril) for mercy's sake : "I prithee daughter, do not make me mad." (II. iv. 220.)

45. **In temper**—in my normal condition of mind ; normal disposition.

49-50. **She that's......shorter**—This couplet seems to have been addressed to the audience. Some editors think that it crept into the playhouse copy from the mouth of some buffoon actor. Muir explains thus :

"The maid, who sees only the funny side of the Fool's gibes, and does not realize that Lear is going on a tragic journey, is such a simpleton that she won't know how to preserve her virginity."

ACT II : SCENE I

Analysis. The scene takes us to Gloucester's castle. Curan informs Edmund about the impending visit of Cornwall and Regan to his abode. Edmund in this finds an excuse for sending his brother from his (Edmund's) apartment, where he was concealing himself, and accordingly he calls Edgar down and entreats him to escape from there, as the father knew the place where he hid himself. Edgar assents, and Edmund hearing his father's arrival, wants Edgar to feign fight for appearance sake. This done, Edgar escapes, as soon as Gloucester enters. Edmund stabbing in his arm, pretends that Edgar venomously attacked on him, at his (Edmund's) refusal to become an accomplice in the unholy plot of his father's murder. At this, Edmund is applauded by Gloucester as "loyal and natural boy" and also promises him to evolve some means, whereby he would succeed him. Then appear on the stage Cornwall and Regan, who are told about Edgar's supposed ingratitude and Edmund's heroism in facing the situation. Influenced by Edmund's "virtue and obedience" (none of which he had and hence the irony), Cornwall attaches him to his train, as he shall need "Natures of such deep trust." At the end of the scene the visitors disclose to Gloucester why they called on him in that "threading dark-ey'd night." Letters have been written both by Lear and Goneril referring to their quarrels. Regan and Cornwall deemed it most fitting to answer them away from their home. Thus absenting themselves from their home, they would now like to be advised by Gloucester. They also propose to be away from their home upon Lear's arrival, with a view to staying there.

The wilder action of the tragedy, being associated with night, has symbolical singificance. According to Brandes, Shakespeare should have "conceived 'King Lear'.........on a night of storm and terror."

Notes

1. **Save thee**—*i.e.*, May God save thee, a common form of salutation.

7. **Ones**—news, which is often plural in Shakespeare.

8. **Ear-bussing**—*i.e.*, the speaker's lips touching the hearer's ear.

N.B. Collier suggests a quibble may have been intended : bussing=kissing ; buzzing=whispering.

Arguments—subjects or themes of conversation.

10. **Likely**—probable. **Towards**—imminent : impending.

14. **The better ! the best !**—So much the better for my purposes ; rather it is the best thing that could happen.

15. **This weaves........ business**—The coming of Duke very well suits to my designs. Edmund sees the chance of winning over the Duke, through Regan to support him in his vicious plan of disinheriting Edgar.

16. **Hath set......brother**—has set guards round the castle to capture my brother, as and when he is found.

17. **Of a queasy question**—of a ticklish nature ; one that needs delicate and skilful handling ; literally 'squeamish—*i.e.*, easily made sick.

18. **Briefness.........work**—May promptitude and good fortune work in my behalf. **Briefness**—swift and immediate action ; promptitude.

20. **Watches**—has set a watch to take you.

23. **Have you............Cornwall ?**—Don't you have good reason to avoid the Duke of Cornwall ?

24. **I' th' haste**—in great haste ; the use of 'the' being emphatic.

25-26. **Have you............Albany**—Have you said anything in regard to the position which he as a partisan has assumed against the Duke of Albany ?

N.B. Delius explains that Edmund tries to confuse Edgar by asking him these unexpected questions rapidly and to make him think that he is surrounded by dangers, from which the immediate flight is his escape.

There are several critics, who consider it to be improbable that Edgar should find an escape rather than staying to clear himself of suspicion, and at least explain the situation to Gloucester.

27. **Advice yourself**—consider ; reflect.

28. **On't**—of it.

30. **In cunning**—in pretence ; in order to avoid the appearance of collusion : feint to deceive Gloucester.

31. **Quit you well**—make a vigorous show of fighting.

32. **Yield.. father**—These words are spoken loudly, so as to be overheard by Gloucester.

34-35. **Would...endeavour**—would induce people to believe that I have had a desperate fight.

35-36. **I have ..sport**—Young gallants, sometimes under the influence of drink, would stab at their arms, in order to be able to drink the health of their mistresses in blood.

39. **Out**—drawn ; unsheated.

40. **Mumbling...charms**—Edmund plays on the superstitious nature of Gloucester. **Conjuring**—binding by incantations.

41. **To stand......mistress**—to assist him with her favour. *Cf.* "All's Well That Ends Well," III. iii. 8 :

"And fortune play upon thy prosperous helm
As thy auspicious mistress."

43. **I bleed**—Edmund must gain time to allow Edgar to escape. He would not be confronted with him until Gloucester is convinced of his guilt.

45. **Fled this way**—A wrong way should be pointed out.

47. **Persuade me...lordship**—instigate me to your murder.

48. **But that**—but when that.

49. **Bend**—aim.

52. **Loathly...stood**—abhorrence and opposition, I showed to him.

53. **In fell motion**—with a vigorous attack. **Motion**—thrust ; a fencing term.

54. **Prepared**—unsheathed and ready for that purpose. **Charges home**—stabs venomously ; makes a home thrust at.

55. **Unprovided**—unprotected : defenceless. **Lanc'd**—pierced ; wounded ; made a deep cut in.

56. **But**—The Folio reads 'And' ; the Quarto has 'But', the latter use being logical and hence convincing.

56-57. **But when...encounter**—But when he visualized that all my courage, emboldened by the justice of my cause, was nobly roused to face his challenge.

N.B. Staunton suggests "whe'r" = whether ; Furness adopts this to make the construction somewhat logical, but Verity contends that it would be but vain to find symmetry, "the broken, disjointed style" of the whole speech being intended to instigate Edmund's feigned agitation.

58. **Or whether gasted**—or whether it was, that he got frightened.

61. **And found...dispatch**—and when he is found, let him be put to death instantly.

N.B. The pause after 'found' makes the denunciatory 'despatch' still more emphatic.

62. **Arch and patron**—chief patron.

63. **Proclaim it**—proclaim to this effect.

65. **Bringing ....stake**—Craig suggests that it was customary to chain captives to a stake of wood, but Gloucester perhaps means 'bringing Edgar to the place of execution' without implying that he is to be burnt at the stake.

67. **Dissuaded him**—attempted to persuade him against.

68. **Plight**—fully determined ; firmly fixed. **With curst speech**—with bitter and provoking reproaches.

69. **Discover him**—to expose his designs.

70. **Unpossessing**—incapable of inheriting, and so beggarly.

71. **If I............stand**—if I should choose to stand.

71-73. **Would the.........faith'd**—"Do you imagine that any trust reposed in you or any virtue of worth supposed to belong to you, would cause your words to be believed ?"—(Deighton).

73. **Faith'd**—believed ; credited.

75. **Character**—handwriting.

75-76. **I'd turn.........practice**—I would make it seem, as only your temptation, plot and treacherous device.

76. **Suggestion**—evil instigation.

77-78. **Aud thou...thought**—And you must suppose the entire world to be idiots, if they did not see.

78-80. **The profits.........seek it**—"So great are the profits of death that the spurs to make thee seek it are incitements thereto."—(Furness.)

79. **Pregnan't**—teeming with incitements, readily conceivable.

81. **Strange**—monstrous ; enormous. **Fasten'd**—hardened ; confirmed.

82. **I never got him**—he is no son of mine.

Stage direction : [**Tucket within**]—A set of notes on the trumpet, played as a signal for the march : from Italian 'toccata', *i.e.*, a preliminary flourish on a musical instrument.

84. **Ports**—seaports ; less probably, it may mean gates, means of exit.

85-87. **The Duke............my land**—*N.B.* Other passages make it obvious that the method of tracing criminal was in use in Shakespeare's time, as of course, it is now.

85. **Must grant**—cannot possibly refuse.

87. **Due note**—The requisite basis, on which they could identify.

88. **Loyal and natural**—Gloucester quibbles on the two meanings of 'natural', (i) bastard, and (ii) feeling natural affection, as against the unnaturalness of his legitimate son. But, as the word 'natural' could mean legitimate as well as illegitimate, he may have suggested that he would make Edmund his heir.

89. **Capable**—As in its legal connotation, the term means, 'capable of inheriting'.

N.B. Lord Campbell in his "Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements," regards this as "a remarkable example of Shakespeare's use of technical legal phraseology.........It is only a lawyer who would express the idea of legitimising a natural son by simply saying—I'll work the means, to make him capable."

92. **All .....short**—all revenge would be but inadequate to the offence.

97. **Nam'd**—in Baptism, stood god-father to him.

98. **Shame would......hid**—The very sense of shame would bid me to hide the fact.

100. **Tended**—attended.

102. **Was of the consort**—was one of that company.

103. **Ill-affected**—treacherously disposed ; disloyal.

104. **Put him on**—incited him to ; urged him to attempt.

105. **To have**—In order that they may enjoy. **Expense and waste**—The privilege of spending and squandering of his incomes.

109. **I'll not be there**—They shall not find me there to receive them.

119-111. **Have shown......office**—have behaved, as a dutiful son should do.

111. **Child-like**—filial.

112. **Bewray**—disclose ; discover.

N.B. 'Bewray' and 'betray' are interchangeably used, but the former (unlike the latter) does not show treachery inherent.

113. **Apprehend**—arrest.

115-116. **He shall...harm**—I will see to it that no one need be afraid of any harm from him. *N.B.* A euphemism for, 'he will be put to death.'

116-117. **Make your .....please**—carry out your plans for his capture, and make use of my authority and resources in any way you please, for that purpose.

118. **Virtue and obedience**—virtuous obedience.

120. **Such deep trust**—*N.B.* Ringing irony in these words.

121. **Seize on**—As a staunch supporter and ally.

122. **Truly, however else**—My loyal services are yours to command ; whatever be my shortcomings, I will be faithful.

125. **Thus out of season**—*N.B.* Regan must be supposed to interrupt Cornwall. **Threading dark-ey'd night**—Traversing the darkness, cumbrously ; the figure refers to the eye of a needle, too small to be visible.

126. **Prize**—importance.

127. **Have use**—must ask and make use of.

129. **Which**—Refers to the letter of Lear and not to 'differences'.

129-130. **Which I......our home**—which I deemed it most fitting to answer, away from home.

N.B. She desires to answer the letters away from home, so that the King cannot quarter himself there before she has sought the advice of Goneril, who also would come to Gloucester's castle.

130. **From**—away from.

131. **From hence..... dispatch**—"Are waiting to be sent on their errand"—Deighton.

134. **Which craves......use**—which urgently requires to make a prompt use of the counsel.

ACT II : SCENE II

Analysis. The events of this scene take place quite early in the morning, as suggested by the first line. Kent, as directed by Lear; and Oswald, as directed by Regan and Cornwall arrive at Gloucester's castle, where outside, after having travelled separately, they meet each other. Kent feels incensed and resentful against Oswald, for being the bearer of the letter, that has wrought this ill. Kent showers abuses on Oswald, calling him "nothing but the composition of a knave, beggar, coward, pender, and the son and heir of a mongrel bitch." Oswald's shouts of murder, bring in Cornwall, Regan and Gloucester. When an enquiry is made, even in that, Kent, as usual, maintains his blunt demeanour, for which he is punished by being placed into the stocks. His plea of being King's messenger is of no use. Gloucester entreats on behalf of Kent that "the good King, his master will check him" for his great fault, and that the King must feel offended for thus confining his messenger. Even his entreaties prove to be ineffective. Kent declares that he has just received a letter (which comes to him as a miraculous relief in his miserable plight) from Cordelia, which he would read with the comforting beams of the sun. Presently, he with "weary and o'er-watch'd" eyes falls asleep oblivious of his troubles, very much like a stoic.

Notes

1. **Dawning**—It is evident that the scene opens early in the morning before daybreak.

N.B. "It is night, and, as in Shakespeare, that time of day which is approaching is given by way of greeting, and not which

is then present. Oswald wishes Kent, whom he does not recognize in the dark, a good dawning."—(Delius).

Verity suggests that the affected phrase "is meant to characterize the finicking, pseudo-courtier Oswald."

1. **Art of this house ?**—are you a servant here, in this house ?

5. **If thou lov'st me**—merely a conventional phrase, as we should now say, 'if you will be so good'.

8. **Lipsbury pinsfold**—Lipsbury refers to Liptown ; pinfold means an enclosure for cattle, wherein stray cattle are confined and a fine is charged for releasing them later. Nares explains, "It is just possible that the expression might mean in or between my teeth, the teeth being the pinfold inside the lips." Though Kent does not want to bite Oswald, the phrase expresses contempt for him.

10. **I know thee not**—as it is not yet light. It is also likely that Oswald affects ignorance, perhaps to avoid another encounter with Kent.

12. **Know me for ?**—know me to be ?

13. **An eater...meats**—one who eats the remains of food, and hence beggarly.

N.B. The whole speech of Kent is a spurt of contempt being showered on Oswald, whose pretentious ambition was to be considered a gentleman.

14. **Three-suited**—Servants were apparently provided with three suits of clothes, a year. In Ben Jonson's "The Silent Woman", III. i. Mrs. Otter scolding her husband, whom she treats as a dependent, enquires of him : "Who allows you your gorsemeat, and man's meat, your three suits of apparel a year ?"

14-15. **Hundred pound**—Signifies a term of reproach ; as the possession of a hundred pound was supposed to be the lowest qualification for any one who would claim the title of a gentleman.

N.B. Cf. Middleton's Phoenix, IV. iii. "How is this ? Am used like a hundred-pound gentleman ?"

15. **Worsted-stocking**—*N. B.* "The stockings in England in the reign of Queen Elizabeth were remarkably expensive, and

scarce any other kind were worn, even, by those who had not above forty shillings a year wages."—(Steevens). **Lily-liverd**—white-livered and hence cowardly.

N.B. Liver was regarded as the seat of courage and a white, *i.e.*, bloodless liver, was a sign of cowardice.

16. **Action-taking**—excessively litigant ; one who instead of fighting like a man, while being beaten, basely goes to law. **Glass-gazing**—one who contemplates himself in a glass ; haughty and foppish. **Super-serviceable**—over-officious; busy-body ; meddlesome.

17. **Finical**—fastidious with affectation. **One-trunk-inheriting**—implies beggarly ; one trunk being sufficient to contain all his belongings, inherited from his father.

19. **Composition**—compound ; mixture.

20. **Heir**—inheriting the characteristics of a mongrel bitch.

22. **Thy addition**—the titles, I have hitherto conferred upon you.

24. **Of thee**—by you.

25. **Varlet**—rascal ; a term of reproach.

26. **Is it...since**—it is but two days ago.

N.B. Shakespeare, with the artless art of such time allusions, imparts verisimilitude to the course of the action.

29. **A sop o' th' moonshine**—"If the text is not corrupt, Kent must have meant that he would knock Oswald into a puddle, or pond where he might look up at the moon."—Craig Entwisle thus interprets, "Plainly Kent's intention is to make a 'sop' of him in the sense of steeping him in his own blood, by the consenting light of the moon." Nares alludes to a dish called 'eggs in moonshine'.

N.B. Kent's threat is tantamount to slang phrases, such as, 'I'll give you a dressing ; I will cook your hash.

30. **Cullionly**—despicably mean. **Barber-monger**—one having frequent dealings with barber, being constantly associated with him.

33-34. **Take vanity...father**—"Side with that frivolous piece of worthlessness against the royal dignity of her father" —Deighton.

N.B. Lady Vanity, like Iniquity, was a common character

in the old morality plays ; allusions to them are quite frequent in Elizabethan drama, *e.g.*, in Ben Jonson's "The Devil is an Ass," I. i. 46 :

Sat. What vice ? what kind would'st thou have it of ?

Pug. Why any, Fraud,
or Covetousness, or Lady Vanity
or Old Iniquity.

35. **Carbonado**—to cut a piece of meat before broiling or grilling it.

35-36. **Come your ways**—come along. *N.B.* In Northern England the phrase is still prevalent.

38-39. **You neat slave**—you foppish rascal ; trim, finical rogue.

41. **Matter**—the subject of the quarrel.

N.B. Kent deliberately misunderstands Edmund and takes the 'matter' to mean 'cause of quarrel.' *Cf.* "Hamlet" II. ii. 195 :

Pol. What is the matter, my Lord ?

Hamlet. Between who ?

42. **With you...please**—the matter is with you ; come, let me deal with you. **Goodman boy**—a title of mock-respect for an impudent person. *N.B.* The use is sarcastic and implies contempt.

43. **Flesh ye**—to initiate ; to feed with flesh for the first time, a hunting phrase.

46. **Upon your lives**—at the risk of losing your lives.

49. **Difference**—reason for quarrelling.

51. **You have..........valour**—You have shown enough of your pugnacity, fighting heroically. *N.B.* Ironical use.

52. **Nature...thee**—Nature renounces any claim to have produced you ; nature disowns all parts in your making.

52-53. A **tailor made thee**—A proverbial joke ; 'you are no better than a lay figure dressed up in clothes." *cf.* Cymbeline, IV. ii. 81 ; "Thy tailor, who is thy grandfather ; he made these clothes, which, as it seems, made thee."

56. **Made him so ill**—made such a poor creature, as he is.

60. **At........beard**—listening to the petition of his age ; considering the fact that he is advancing in years.

61-62. **Thou whoreson...letter**—the letter 'z', which was generally ignored in the dictionaries of the time. Ben Jonson, his "English Grammar", says : 'z' is a letter, which is often in heard among us, but seldom seen."

63. **Unbolted villain**—a thorough scoundrel ; "this fellow is a rascal, through and through"—(Kittredge).

N.B. 'Unbolted mortar' is mortar made of unsifted lime, and therefore to break the lumps, it is necessary to tread it by men in wooden shoes (an obsolete process). This 'unbolted villain' is, therefore, this coarse villain.—(Tollet.)

Verity says that 'unsifted' yield the figurative motion 'unmitigated' and the latter seems to be more appropriate here than 'coarse.'

64. **Jakes**—privy. **Wagtail**—contemptible creature; servile and fawning knave. Kittredge comments that the wagtail is so called "from the spasmodic up and down jerking of its tail". Oswald is too scared to stand still.

66. **Beastly**—beast-like ; irrational ; more like beast than man.

67. **Anger hath a privilege**—While in wrath, person should be excused to speak strong language, oblivious of courtesy at that moment.

70. **Who......honesty**—one who has no honesty about him.

71. **Holy cords**—natural and sacred bonds of affection, such as existing between father and child. **A twain**—in twain; into two.

72. **Intrince**—a shortened form of 'intrinsic'; means inward, implying closely interwoven ; intricate ; tightly drawn.

72-73. **Smooth...rebel**—humour and flatter every passion that breaks forth in their masters.

73. **Rebels**—the plural is probably due to the influence of the neighbourhood of 'lords'.

75. **Renege**—deny.

75-76. **Turn their...gale**—This refers to the belief that the halcyon, if hung up by the tail or beak, would turn in the direction of the wind.

N.B. "If hung up, would vary with the wind and by that means show from what point it blew."—(Steevens.)

Halcyon or the kingfisher, once believed to make a floating nest in the sea, which remained calm, while it was hatching.

76. **Every gale and vary**—a hendiadys for 'every varying gale'.

78. **Epileptic**—contorted like that of a person in an epileptic, distorted by the effect of grinning.

N.B. Oswald though being insipid and trembling with fear was still persistently smiling to assume a look of extreme carelessness.

79. **Smoile**—smile at. *N.B.* Perhaps Kent recollects to speak in dialect.

80. **Sarum plain**—Salisbury common.

81. **Cackling**—chattering; *N.B.* "Oswald's forced laughter suggests to Kent the cackling of a goose".—(Furness.)

Camelot—The seat where King Arthur kept his court; according to Selden, it was in Somersetshire; and close to it "there are many large moors, upon which great numbers of geese are bred, so that many other places in England are from hence supplied with quills and feathers."—(Hanmer.) Staunton supposed that the reference was to the custom among Arthur's knights of sending their conquered foes to Camelot to do homage to the king.

In legends Camelot is identified with Winchester.

83. **How fell you out ?**—What made you to fall into a quarrel ?

84-85. **No.........knave**—Craig has made the following important note :

"Coleridge (Notes on the Plays of Shakespeare)...describes Kent as 'perhaps the nearest to perfect goodness in all Shakespeare's characters.' 'His direct antithesis', he goes on to remark, 'is the steward' (Oswald), 'the only character of utter, irredeemable baseness in Shakespeare' ; and I think it is worth consideration that this may give as the key to the violent bearing of Kent in this scene and the unbridled and coarse language he uses. This is generally considered a blemish in the play ; but we must, I think, try to look at Kent, the brave, the noble, the generous, the true, suddenly confronted and opposed

in the execution of his duty, at the end of a long and wearisome journey, by Oswald, the basest of the base, who without one spark of merit and, as Coleridge describes him, 'the willing tool of a Goneril,' was yet putting on an air of provoking self-sufficiency and who, unconscious that he is in the presence of a great noble man, and, thinking he had only a common serving-man to deal with, was making no effort to cloak his real base motives of action ; and is it strange that the meeting of two such men should be most stormy, that it should bring out all that was violent in Kent's nature, and that a scene should occur of no terror than the elements of fire and water, when the thundering shock at meeting tears the cloudy cheeks of heaven ?"

88. **Likes**—pleases.

96-97 **Constrains...nature**—forces himself to behave in a manner, which is very much different from what he really is, assuming a blunt demeanour.

N.B. Clarke says that Cornwall means that Kent "distorts the style of straightforwardness speaking quite from its nature, which is sincerity ; whereas he makes it a cloak for craft."

96. **Garb**—'preparation in its radical sense, but now we use the word in its literal sense 'dress' ; here, used figuratively, it means 'manner', 'style'.

98. **Must speak truth**—as instructed by his nature.

99. **And they.. plain**—if people accept this fact, without being resentful, well and good, otherwise he will throw his excuse of being plainspoken and candid.

101. **Harbour**—hide ; give cover to.

102. **Silly-ducking**—ridiculously servile and fawning ; ludicrously obequious ; 'ducking', refers to 'bowing.'

102-103. **Observants...nicely**...attendants, who apparently would be quite punctilious in discharging their courtly duties, to the utmost exactness.

105. **Under th'......aspect**—with the approval of your lofty favour. *N.B.* (*a*) Kent seems to be quibbling on the two meanings of the word 'aspect' : (i) appearance, and (ii) the relative position of the heavenly bodies as they appear to an observer, and the influence attributed thereto.

(*b*) Wright considers 'aspect' to be an astrological term like 'influence' in the following line.

(c) The accent is on the second syllable.

106. **Influence**—An astrological term ; means the power exercised by planets and stars on the lives of human beings.

N.B. Cornwall seems to imply that Cornwall is a heavenly body.

Like the ....front—"Probably an allusion to the wreath of curls round the head of the sun-god in old coins, representing the lambent rays on the circumference of the sun's disc."—Deighton.

N.B. Kent burlesques the flamboyant and affected style of speech, frequent among the courtiers of that time.

107. **Front**—forehead.

108-109. **To go........ so much**—My objective in this is to give up that plain manner of speech, which you find to be faulty.

108. **Dialect**—language : manner of speech.

109-110. **He that......knave**—He that tried to deceive you with an excuse of outspoken speech, was an evident knave.

110. **A plain knave**—an evident knave ; a common wheedler.

111-112 **Though I...to 't**—Although you beseech me to be a common wheedler, I will not be one, even if I should win your displeasure in denying you to be a sycophant. The editors mostly interpret thus : though I should so far win over your displeasure (*i.e.*, soften your wrath) as to make you entreat me to be an evident knave.

116. **To strike at me**—To aim a blow at me. **Upon his misconstruction**—As a result of his misunderstanding and misrepresenting me.

117. **Compact**—in league with the King.

118. **Being.........rail'd**—Exulted over me, while I was down.

N.B. 'Insult' used in the sense of 'exult'; Cotgrave's French Dictionary : insulter='to insult, crow, vaunt, or triumph oxer.'

119. **And put.........man**—And assumed such a heroic demeanour ; put on an air of high valour.

120. **That worthied him**—"Won honour for himself"—(Kitteredge), that made him look like a grand fellow.

121. **For him......self-subdu'd**—For assailing him, who lying on the ground, was by that very fact, incapable of defending himself.

122-123. **And, in......again**—And having so heroically shown his courage, was thereby provoked to knock me down here again.

122. **Fleshment**—The act of fleshing, hence the stimulation resulting from the first triumph. "A young soldier is said to flesh his sword the first time he draws blood with it."—Henley.

124-125. **None of......fool**—There is not one of these rogues or cowards to whom, when it comes to boasting, Ajax would appear but a fool.

N.B. It refers to the bragging of Ajax, after his slaughter of the Grecian flocks and herds, which in madness he mistook for his enemies, the chieftains of the army.

In Homer, Ajax is a great warrior of great prowess, but Shakespeare considers him merely a type of the brave but dull-witted hero which implies that such men are easily duped by rogues and cowards, like Oswald.

125. **Stocks**—A wooden frame composed of two blocks, for punishing the petty offenders ; with notches for holding their legs as in a clamp.

N.B. "Formerly in great houses there were movable stocks for the correction of servants."—(Farmer).

136. **Stubborn**—rough ; violent ; fierce. **Reverend**—merely aged ; grey-haired ; not actually reverence-worthy.

130. **You shall........ respect**—You will be but showing little courtes.

131. **Grace and person**—An insult to the dignity of the crown, as well as personal insult.

132. **Stocking**—by putting him in stocks.

134. **Shall**—would.

135. **Till noon.........too**—*N.B.* Regan being a sadist. delights in aimless torturing others. Verity observes : "Two great features of Regan's character are her cruelty and restless-

ness. Whenever anyone suggests something evil, especially something cruel, she quickly suggests something worse, more cruel. She delights in causing and seeing purposeless suffering—suffering for suffering's sake. It is the joy in others' pain which marks the persecutor ..She (Regan) is quick of brain and of tongue ; always pushing forward with a sort of alert fiendishness ; whereas Goneril is composed and thoroughly business-like in her malevolence, ready to stab any one to the heart, if her schemes require it, but self-restrained and not so wanton in causing pain. The one sister represents the negative principle of absolute want of feeling, the other the active principle of ill-feeling. To my mind Regan is more odious, though less formidable, than Goneril."

139. **Colour**—character ; kind ; complexion.

140. **Bring away**—bring here ; "hasten to bring them." —(Craig).

141. **Grace**—honour ; dignity.

142. **Much**—great.

143. **Check**—reprove ; rebuke ; impede. **Low correction**—punishment, befitting to the 'barest wretches' ; humiliating punishment.

145. **Pilf'rings**—petty thefts.

146. **Must take it ill**—cannot help being resentful.

147. **So.........messenger**—insulted in the person of his messenger.

141. **I'll answer that**—I will be accountable for that.

149. **May**—is likely to.

151. **For......affairs**—for showing on her behalf.

155. **Rubb'd**—impeded ; thwarted ; checked ; interfered by an obstacle.

N.B. A metaphor from the game of bowls, where 'rub' is an obstacle, by which a bowl is diverted from its proper course.

156. **Watch'd**—kept awake.

158. **May......heels**—may be in a wretched plight, like stockings, worn out at the heels.

159. **Give you good morrow**—'May God give you good morning' ! a courteous term, used while meeting as well as departing.

160. **Taken**—received.

161. **That must...saw**—whose luck it is to prove the truth of the common proverb.

162-163. **Thuo out......sun** !—The proverb means to pass from good to a bad state ; from better to a worse one ; it occurs in John Heywood's "Dialogues on Proverbs" :

> "In your running from him to me, yee runne
> Out of God's blessing into the warme sunne."

Craig suggests : "The folly of leaving some grateful and beneficent shade as of a spreading tree to journey or toil in the extreme heat of the midday sun." Hanmer tells us that it is an old proverbial saying, "applied to those who are turned out of the house and deprived of all the comforts of life except the common benefits of the air and sun." *Cf*. Leir, 1154, "he came from bad to worse."

164. **Thou beacon**—heaven's benediction and the writer of the letter to Kent, a part of that benediction. **This under-globe**—"this sublunary world."—Deighton.

165. **Comfortable**—comforting : helpful.

166-167. **Nothing......misery**—When we are frustrated in our designs, any relief as such, seems to be quite miraculous, or, only a man groaning under the weight of misfortunes, as I am, could expect such a miraculous solace, as this Cordelia's letter gives me. Hudson's explanation is convincing : "I am very much in the dark, as to what the text means : of course the literal sense is, 'hardly anything but misery sees miracles' ; but the question is, what are the particulars referred to ? or what are the miraculous things to be seen in this case ? and why is misery said to see them ? I suspect that 'see' is used in the sense of experience : a sense it often bears. In that case the meaning may be, 'miracles are hardly ever wrought but in behalf of the wretched.' And upon this thought Kent seems to be building a hope of better times, both for himself and the old king ; while, on the other hand, nothing short of a miraculous providence seems able to turn their course of action."

157. **From Cordelia**—*N.B.* The question, 'when did Kent receive this letter from Cordelia ?' is one of the insoluble puzzles of the play. Apparently it is from the letter that

Kent picks up the information which he later communicates to the Gentleman in III. i. 30-34. But if that be so, apparently Cordelia hears about her father's calamities, even before they take place.

169. **Obscured course**—The Earl of Kent living in disguise of an attendant.

169-171. **And shall.... their remedies**—Probably a corrupt passage. Malone says that two half lines have dropped out of the text between the words "state and "seeking". He take enormous state to mean, "the confusion subsisting in the state in consequences of the discord, which had arisen between the Dukes of Albany and Cornwall, of which Kent hopes Cordelia will avail herself."

"I know that the letter is from Cordelia who hath been informed of my obscured course, and I shall gain time by this strange disguise and situation. which I shall employ in seeking to prevent our present losses."—(Mason).

170. **Enormous**—irregular ; lawless ; abnormal. **State**—state of affairs.

171. **All**—perfectly ; wholly. **Over-watch'd**—worn out by watching ; keeping awake for that.

172-173. **Take vantage......lodging**—O, my heavy eyes, take advantage of your weariness, to close in sleep, so as not to see this disgraceful, situation, wherein (being put into stocks) I am placed.

174. **Smile once more**—Though adverse to me now, cast your favourable looks once again upon me. **Turn thy wheel**—Fortune, turn your wheel, so that the cruel scourges of men may come down to the bottom.

N.B. Cf. Tennyson's "Enid", "Turn, Fortune, turn thy wheel and lower the proud." Brown in "Christian Morals" says : In days of prosperity, "forget not the wheel of things. Think of sullen vicissitudes but beat not the brains to foreknow them."

ACT II : SCENE III

Analysis. This scene takes us into a wood, where Edgar has concealed himself, "in the happy hollow of a tree" in disguise of a Bedlam beggar, resolved "to take the basest and most poorest shape." He proclaims he is no longer

Edgar—"Edgar I nothing am." Goggin observes: "This short scene takes up the underplot at the point, where it was left in II. i, 86 ; at the same time it prepares for the events of the III. iv, by showing Edgar on the point of assuming the disguise of a Bedlam beggar. Most editors following Pope, give the stage direction 'A Wood', but the appearance of a wood close to Gloucester's castle is rather in contradiction of Gloucester's own statement in II. iv, 303-04, "for many miles about there's scarce a bush." There is no stage direction in the original editions. It seems best to imagine Edgar as coming away from the castle whence he just escaped ; in the darkness, and in his agitation he fails to observe Kent. My view is that Edgar, hiding himself "by the happy hollow of a tree", makes Goggin's contention much less convincing.

Notes

Stage Direction: **Enter Edgar**—"Folio has no scene division...It is possible that Folio represents a version of the play performed on a platform, without an inner stage or gallery."

1. **Proclaim'd**—*i.e.*, as a felon ; as a criminal.

2-3. **And by...........hunt**—And by luckily being able to conceal myself in the pleasant hollow of a tree. I found an escape from the searching looks of the chasers.

3. **No port is......free**—*i.e.*, A watch is set at every seaport.

3-5. **No place......my taking**—There is no such place where those in the watch are not the most vigilant ones, in order to capture me.

5. **Whiles I may......'scape**—while there is chance of escaping.

N.B. 'Whiles', the old genitive of 'while'—time, used adverbially.

6. **Am bethought**—have got the idea ; have resolved ; have hit upon the plan.

8-9. **That ever......beast**—That ever the utmost poverty, in showing its utter contempt for man, debases him so as to be assimilated to the status of a beast.

9. **Grime**—begrime ; soil deeply.

10. **Blanket my loins**—cover my loins with nothing but a blanket. **Elf all........ knots**—mat and tangle my hair, such as fairies and woodland sprites are supposed to do. Such looks are known as 'elf-looks', caused by neglect and for that elves were blamed.

N.B. Cf. "The Elizabethan Underworld" (possibly by Dekkar) wherein the Abram Cove is described as "a lusty strong rogue......his hair long and filthily knotted, for he keeps no barber."

11. **Presented**—assumed ; feigned. **Outface**—brave.

14. **Bedlam beggars**—They were harmless patients or partial convalescents from Bedlam, wearing badges on their arms, and turned out to loiter and beg in the streets. Dekker in his "Belman of London" (1608) brilliantly illustrates Shakespeare's description of the character :

"Of all the mad rascals, the Abraham-man is the most fantastic : The fellow......swears he hath been in Bedlam, and will talk frantically of purpose ; you see pins stuck in sundry places of his native flesh, especially in his arms, which pain he gladly puts himself to (being indeed no torment at all, his skin is either so dead with some foul disease or so hardened with weather) only to make you believe he is out of his wits : he calls himself by the name of Poor Tom and, coming near anybody, cries out 'Poor Tom is a-cold'.

"Of these Abraham-men, some be exceeding merry and do nothing but sing songs fashioned out of their own brains ; some will dance, others will do nothing but laugh or weep ; others are dogged and so sullen both in look and speech, that, spying but small company in a house, they boldly and bluntly enter, compelling the servants through fear to give them what they demand, which is commonly bacon or something that will yield ready money."

15. **Strike in**—strike into. **Numb'd**—stupefied. **Mortified**—deadened ; deprived partly of vigour and sensation, hardened into insensibility to pain. **Bare**—regarded by Kirschbaum as an interpolation, a recollection of 'presented nakedness' (*line 11*).

16. **Wooden pricks**—skewers ; pins of wood or iron, especially for keeping meat in form while roasting. **Sprigs of rosemary**—small twigs of rosemary, which is evergreen fragrant flowering shrub.

17. **Object**—appearance ; sight.

18. **Pelting**—petty ; paltry.

N.B. *Cf.* "Richard II," II. i. 60 ;

"Like to a tenement or pelting farm."

Sheep-cotes—sheep-folds ; enclosures in which sheep are kept.

19. **Lunatic bans**—wild curses.

N.B. 'Ban' is derived from Anglo-Saxon 'bannam', 'to summon' ; akin to old French 'ban'=a proclamation, prescription, summons. Verity suggests that from its use in the phrase 'Pope's (or papal) ban='excommunication,' came the general sense 'curse'.

20. **Enforce their charity**—Compel people to relieve their wants, by giving them alms. **Turlygod**—Warburton preferred the reading 'Turlipin', that was a fraternity of the beggars, naked and raving like mad, running up and down the Europe during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The idea that these vagabonds resembled the English Bedlam beggars of later times seems far from being unnatural.

21. **That's...am**—There is some hope yet left for me as poor Tom, and hence I cease to be Edgar.

"In assuming this character, I may preserve myself ; as Edgar I am inevitably gone."

ACT II : Scene IV

Analysis. Lear arrives at Gloucester's castle, after having searched Regan and Cornwall at their residence in vain. He is at a loss to understand why they should so strangely leave their home and not send his messenger back. But presently, the very sight of his messenger placed in stocks and the apathetic refusal of Cornwall and Regan to see him at first threaten to rouse Lear to another outburst of passion, led by which he commands them to see him instantly, or else,

"I'll beat the drum
Till it cry sleep to death."

Lear, considerably exerting himself, restrains himself.

Experience has taught him much more. He has himself cast off Cordelia ; Goneril has driven him out of her house. Now, Regan remains his only hope. Under the circumstances

he shows himself mild and submissive, even to the extent of kneeling down before Regan and beg—"That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed and food." (II. iv. 156). Regan instead of sympathising with her father, defends Goneril and justifies whetever the latter did to deal with Lear's furious temper. She calls his entreaties as mere "unsightly trick." Goneril comes and now both the sisters jointly pierce the heart of the old man with their shafts of sarcasm. Regan wants him with his fifty followers, to go back to Goneril, whereupon Lear proposes better to "abjure all roofs." On his readiness later to go back to Goneril and stay with his fifty followers, she retorts : "What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five." At this came still more pinching Regan's final stroke, "What need one ?" A terrible tempest of passions sweeps over Lear, as a result of which he rushes out into the pitiless storm, shrieking, "I shall go mad." Gloucester intervenes but in vain, and the hearts of the daughters are still more hardened. They all shut their door leaving the old man in the horrors of night wherein "The bleak winds do sorely ruffle."

Notes

Stage Direction : **Enter Lear**—It is evident that after leaving Goneril and Albany, Lear went to the house of Cornwall and Regan, finding that they left that evening for Gloucester's castle, he also followed them.

1. **So depart**—depart in this sudden and eccentric manner.

3. **The night before**—*N.B.* Clarke remarks, "This expression, introduced at this juncture, serves to denote that the morning is now well set in ; and allows the progress of dramatic time to take place with sufficient rapidity for the spectators being beguiled into easy credence, when, at the close of the present long scene, Gloucester says, 'The night comes on' ; and Cornwall soon after observes, 'Tis wild night'.

4. **Remove**—removal ; departure.

6. **Mak'st thou...pastime ?**—Do you consider such a disgrace as your amusement ?

9. **Cruel**—*N.B.* a quibble on 'cruel' and 'crewel'=thin worsted yarn, out of which garters were sometimes made.

11-12 **When a man's......nether-stocks**—When a man is found saucy and licentious in the use of legs (as in kicking) wooden stocks are put on them.

11. **Over-lusty**—saucy, lively, "too much of a vagabond". —(Kitteridge).

12. **Nether-stock**—an old term for 'stockings'

13-14. **What's he......here ?**—What sort of man is he that has so mistaken your status as put you in these wooden stockings ?

22-23. **By Jupiter...by Juno**—*N.B.* We may remember a similar exchange of swearing in. I. i. 167. Much water has flown under the bridge since then. Lear must take Kent's 'toss back' of the ball quietly and passively. "Will the strong candour of this opposition even to the shouting back of his oaths, remind Lear of that other occasion, and make him 'better see' ?"—asks Edmund Blunden.

26. **Upon respect**—There are two possible interpretations, (i) deliberately, and (ii) upon Respect, personified (Malone), or upon the respect due to the King's messenger. (Johnson).

27-29. **Resolve me .....from us**—Satisfy me in reasonable brevity, how it was possible for you to deserve or for them to inflict this relentless treatment, even after having discovered that you are a messenger from me.

27. **Resolve me**—satisfy my queries ; make it clear to me. **With all modest haste**--without going beyond what is necessary ; without being verbose. "With as much haste as may consist with telling the whole truth."—(Schmidt). "Not excessive, not too great to make your narrative unintelligible."—(Deighton.)

31. **I did.........to them**—I delivered your letters with due respects to them.

32-33. **Ere I was...kneeling**—before I got up from my submissive posture of kneeling.

33. **Reeking post**—a messenger who came hot and perspiring as affected by his scorching ride.

N.B. Post : "In Shakespeare's time the fastest method (about ten miles an hour) of public travel was 'posting', *i.e.*, by means of post-horses, relays of which stood ready for service at fixed stages," usually in the stable-yards of inns. 'Post' in Shakespeare always means the swiftest travelling: "post-haste", as we say.—(Verity.)

34. **Stew'd**—to be in a state of worry and agitation. **Stew'd**

in his haste—"a mass of perspiration from the speed, with which he had travelled."—(Deighton.)

36. **Spite of intermission**—despite the interruption which so delayed the response I was to receive.

"Though my business was thus interrupted and the answer delayed which I was to receive"—(Schmidt.)

N.B. Kent's letters, he being the first comer, had the first claim on their notice, but priority was given to Oswald who came late and pushed Kent and his affair on one side.

37. **Presently**—at once ; immediately **On whose contents**—on reading the letters, so as to ascertain the purport thereof.

38. **Meiny**—household ; retinue. **Straight took horse** – at once mounted and rode away.

39-40. **Attend the...answer**—wait until they were at leisure to give me their reply.

41. **And meeting**—and I meeting.

42. **Had poison'd mine**—had poisoned their minds as to make it hard for them to welcome me.

44. **Display's so saucily**—behaved with impudence ostentatiously.

45. **More man than wit**—more valour than discretion ; more courage than sense.

N.B. Kent's view in regard to his own conduct is unhappily well-founded and perhaps he could not have behaved and acted more injudiciously in the interests of the King. "Whatever chance there might have been of Lear faring better at the hands of Regan than of General is destroyed by Kent." —(Verity.) Basides Lear's daughter being hostile to him, even those who are devoted to him contribute to his suffering, *e.g.*, Kent here, and the Fool and Knights by provoking Goneril's wrath there.

43. **He rais'd...cries**—alarmed and awoke the household by his dastardly shouts.

47-48. **Found this...shame**—considered my offence so great as to deserve this shameful treatment given to me.

49. **Winter's not...way**—implies that Lear's sorrows are not yet over. "If this be their behaviour, King's troubles are

not yet at an end"—(Johnson). The Fool suggests that as the flight of wild geese signifies the arrival of bad weather, likewise the punishment of Kent signifies that more is yet in reserve for Lear.

51. **Do make...blind**—Their children are not over-anxious to take any notice of them."—(Deighton).

52. **Bear bags**—have their mony bags full.

53. **Shall see......kind**—will certainly find their children attending on them properly.

55. **Turns the key**—*i.e.*, opens the doors.

56. **Dolours**—griefs, with a quibble on 'dollars'.

57. **For**—on account of ; because of ; owing to. **Tell**—"Count or recount ; according to the sense in which 'dolours' is understood."—(Wright).

58-59. **Mother swells...Passio**—*N.B.* 'Mother' and 'Hysterica Passio' are pathological terms ; in the time of Shakespeare they were used for a kind of hysteria, more common among women than among men. They occur frequently in "Declaration of Popish Impostures." Harsnet tells about the mother "riseth of a winde in the bottome of the belly, and proceeding with a great swelling, causeth a very painful collicke in the stomach and an extraordinary giddiness in the head." This gives us key to understand Lear's words, "climbing sorrow" and "swells up towards my heart."

Edward Jordan in his "A Brief Discourse called the Suffocation of the Mother" (1605), thus describes : This disease is called by diverse names amongst our authors, 'Passio Hysterica', Suffocatio', 'Priefocatio', and 'Strangulatus Uteri', 'Caducus Matricis,' *i.e.*, in English, the mother, or the suffocation of the mother, because, most commonly it takes them with choking the throat ; and it is an affection of the mother or wombe." Craig thinks that 'mother' is probably a contraction of 'smoother'.

60. **Thy element's below**—The proper place, *i.e.*, the part of the body you want to afflict, is below.

63. **Made you...of ?**—Did you commit no greater offence than what you have referred to ?

65. **How chance**—*i.e.*, how chances it that ? How does it happen that ?

66-67. **And thou question**—The fool implies that such a query can be put by a man ignorant of a rudimentary truth about human nature, *viz.*, when a man has lost his power and wealth, very few followers would care to cling to him.

69-70. **We'll set......winter**—We will better ask you to learn of the ant that you will gain nothing by following him in the winter of adversity.

N.B. " 'Go to the ant, thou sluggard (says Solomon, Proverbs, vi. 6-8), learn her ways, and be wise ; which having no guide, overseer, or ruller, provideth the meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest'. If, says the Fool, you had been schooled by the ant, you would have known that the King's train, like that sagacious animal, prefer the summer of prosperity to the colder season of adversity."—(Malone).

The Fool preaches faithlessness of fair-weather friends, who always brooding on their self-interests, desert their friends in the winter of adversity. In the winter of Lear's fortunes, his followers leave him in the lurch, as now they cannot make anything out of him.

70–72. **All that...stinking**—"Mankind, says the Fool, may be divided into those who can see and those who are blind. All men, but blind men, though they follow their noses, are led by their eyes ; and this class of mankind seeing the king ruined, have all deserted him ; with respect to the other class, the blind who have nothing but their noses to guide them, they also fly equally from a king whose fortunes are declininig, for of the noses of twenty blind men there is not one but can smell him who, 'being muddied in fortune's mood smells (somewhat strongly of her displeasure' [*A.Y.L.I.*, V. ii. 3.] You need not therefore be surprised at Lear's coming with so small a train."—(Malone).

75-76. **When a wise...mine again**—the Fool implies that the so-called wise man shall be unable to import a much better advice than what he (*i.e.* Fool) himself has given.

78. **That Sir**—That great person ; that man of lofty status.

79. **But for form**—only to keep up appearance.

80. **Will pack**—will hurriedly desert ; will be off at once.

81. **Storm**—*i.e.*, of misfortunes.

83. **The wise man**—the so-called wise man.

84-85. **The knave...perdy**—Cowden Clarke thus explains : "Shakespeare in his own noble philosophy, here affirms that the cunning rogue who deserts his benefactor in the time of reverse, from motives of prudence, show himself fool as well as knave, moral miscalculator as well as moral coward."

Coleridge explains : 'The knave that turns fool' as 'a fool with a circumbendibus' (*i.e.* 'a fool in a round-about way'). Bradley thus comments : "The Fool is referring to his own morals, 'I would have none but knaves follow my advice to desert the king, since a fool gives it' ; and the last two lines of the song mean, "the knave who runs away, follows the advice given by a fool, but I, the fool shall not follow my own advice by taxing the knave."

85. **Perdy**—pardieu *i.e.*, in truth ; certainly ; by God.

87. **Not...Fool**—"Kent, too, is a loyal fool, and not a politic knave"—(Muir.)

88. **Deny**—refuse.

89. **Fetches**—pretexts ; crafty excuses ; subterfuges.

90. **The image...off**—the indications of disobedience and revolt. **Images**—symptoms ; tokens ; embodiments.

91. **Fetch...answer**—Fetch me much better an answer than mere fetches. *N.B.* The quibble on the word.

92. **Quality**—disposition ; temper.

93. **Unremovable and fix'd**—unalterable ; stubbornly firm ; doggedly obstinate.

99. **Inform'd them**—Do you think that to be enough? Should you not bring back a word from them that they would come instantaneously?

102. **Commands, tends**—Gregg thus interprets : "Lear commands her service, tenders his own ; and this may be taken as a conciliatory afterthought, or as an ironical reinforcement of his words." *N.B.* The quarto has 'commands her.'

103. **My breath and blood**—upon my life.

104. **Hot**—passionate, hot-tempered.

105. **May be...well**—*N.B.* Coleridge remarks on this

passage : "The strong interest now felt by Lear to try to find excuses for his daughter—most pathetic."

106-107. **Infirmity doth...bound**—slackness in discharging duties is a reasonable excuse, when a person is ill, but while in sound health he has to recognize his obligations.

N.B. "Lear's generous attempt to excuse Cornwall suggests that he is mellowing with his misfortunes. The fiery quality that he complains of, is one of his own strongest characteristics and he himself was 'unremovable and fixed' when he disinherited Cordelia and banished Kent. His misfortunes have so far dazed him that he almost seems to be losing self-control. But the sight of Kent, and the thought of the indignity thus done him in his messenger throw him back on his old impetuosity."—(Nichol Smith).

106. **Office**—duties.

107—109. **We are not...body**—"We are not our real selves when, being borne down by a weight of suffering, our nature compels the mind to act in sympathy with the body." —(Deighton).

110. **Am fall'n......will**—am angry because of my more impetuous impulse.

111-112. **To take...man**—Which led me to regard, what is nothing more than caprice of a sick man, as the deliberate intention of a man in sound health.

112. **Death on my state**—May I be accursed ! an imprecation called forth by his eyes suddenly falling again upon Kent in the stocks.

114. **Remotion**—removal *i.e.*, their departure from their home ; or probably, keeping themselves aloof, refusing to appear.

115. **Practice**—trickery ; stratagem ; a ruse by which to deceive. **Give**—release. **Forth**—out of the stocks.

117. **Presently**—at once ; immediately ; instantly.

119. **Till it...death**—till its noise has been the death of the sleep, so that they altogether give up the idea of sleeping.

120. **I would...you**—I would see you reconcile with each other.

122. **Cockney**—Several interpretations have been given: (1) an affected woman ; (2) a cock ; (3) a young cock ; (4) an in-

habitant of Cockayne ; (5) a coddled child. Halliwell seems to be convincing : "Cockney is used in various senses amongst others in that of cook which may be its meaning here, although I rather incline to the belief that the reference is to some absurd tale of a London cockney well-known in Shakespeare's time."

Meres in his "Wit's Treasury" says, "Many cockney and wanton women are often sick. The present use of the word is difficult to determine, as affected woman, cook and Londoner would all fit the context. Perhaps the 'heroine of the story was all three. She was so unfamiliar with eels that she did not know that they should be killed before cooking."

Eels—A family of fishes in which the body is much elongated, cylindrical or ribbon-shaped.

123. **Paste**—The dough with which the pie-dish was lined. **Knapp'd**—struck smartly.

N.B. Craig cites Jamieson's "Scottish Dictionary": 'knap' —(verb) to strike smartly, as "Knap the nail on the head."

124. **Coxcombs**—The comb or crest on a cock's head.

125. **Wantons**—impudent creatures. **Buttered his hay**—Greasing the hay of horses was a common trick of cheating ostlers. The horses, disliking grease, were kept from feeding, and the ostler could surreptitiously take away the provender. The cockney's brother seems to have done it in innocence.

126. **Good morrow**—As it was evening then, Lear's greeting is ironical.

129-130. **What reason**—because I know you are my daughter.

131-132. **I would...adult'ress**—"I should separate myself from my wife even in death, on the ground that she could not have been true to me in life.

132. **Sepulchring**—As being the tomb of. *N.B.* The accent is on the second syllable.

133. **Some other...that**—I shall come to that point a little later.

134. **Naught**—worthless ; wicked to the extreme. *N.B.* 'Be naught' is an obsolete form of malediction.

134-135. **She had...unkindness**—An allusion to Greek myth of Prometheus, who was chained to a rock on mount Cauca-

sus, while his liver was daily torn and fed upon by an eagle. This is one of the many subtle hints in the play, which suggest of Lear's classical education.

137. **Quality**—trait of character, disposition ; manner.

138—140. **I have...duty**—I hope that it will prove that your incapability in properly appreciating her merits is proportionately greater than her capability to fall short in her duties.

143. **She have**—she may have.

144. **To such wholesome end**—with such good purpose.

147-148. **Nature in...confine**—You have reached the extreme limit of saturation in your life.

148. **Confine**—prescribed limit ; or Regan may imply (as suggested by Muir) that Lear is imprisoned in the flesh and about to be released by death.

149. **Discretion**—discreet person ; a prudent fellow. **Your state**—your dependent position ; enfeebled state of your mind so also of your body.

151. **Make return**—*i.e.*, return. *N.B.* Circumlocution.

153. **Becomes the house**—is befitting either to the dignity of the royal house or our relations as father and daughter.

155. **Age is unnecessary**—Old men, like myself, are futile ; "Old man has few wants" (Johnson). Verity explains, 'unnecessary' as 'superfluous'—*i.e.*, it has no right to exist, does so only in sufferance ; of course ironical.

156. **Vouchsafe**—condescends to grant.

157. **These are unsightly tricks**—This kneeling and the use of ironical words are unbecoming of you, and hence will be least effective on me. **Unsightly**—unbecoming.

N.B. The pathetic plight of the poor old King helplessly kneeling to the daughter, he has benefited, is to her an unsightly trick.

162. **Stor'd vengeances**—*cf.* Beaumont and Fletcher, "The Coxcomb," I. i. 22 :

"Let all the stored vengeance of heaven's justice."

N.B. The very thought of Goneril and her unnatural and rude behaviour provokes Lear to break forth into another fresh volley of imprecations.

163. **Top**—head. **Young bones**—Kellett remarks : "The curse gains greatly in meaning if we assume that Shakespeare's Lear, like the old playwright's "Leir", knew or suspected that Goneril had already an unborn child."

Kittredge explains that the context makes it certain that the young bones, referred to here, are of Goneril herself. Perrett makes two plausible observations; (i) since the embryo is well protected, it could not be hurt by taking airs, and (ii) Lear could not curse an innocent unborn child. Both these objections can be set aside.

N.B. In the old play, Leir says of Gonorill :

"Poure soule she breeds young bones
And that is it makes her so tutchy sure."

164. **Taking**—bewitching ; infecting ; contaminating.

N.B. In Elizabethan English 'take' is often used in the sense of 'malignant supernatural powers' which was generally in the form of disease and hence it should mean 'to strike with disease.' **Fie, sir, fie**—denoting disapprobation or disgust.

166. **Infect her beauty**—by pestilences, so as to make her a despicable object.

167. **Fen-suck'd fogs**—noxious vapours, sucked up from the swamps by the heat of the sun. **Fen**—a low marshy land; swamp ; bog.

167-168. **Drawn by...pride**—noxious vapours sucked up from the swamps by the sun may fall upon her so as to destroy her pride in her beauty.

170. **When...on**—when you are under the grip of a fit of wrath and impetuosity once again.

171. **Thou...curse**—*N.B.* Lear's obsequious behaviour in this passage reveals a significant fact of human nature : a man who himself easily yields to flattery, cannot help fawning upon others, so as to appease and propitiate them for his personal ends. It is characteristic of sycophancy.

172. **Tender-hefted**—delicately framed; swayed by tender emotions ; "Whose bosom is agitated by tender passions."
—(Steevens.)

172-173. **Shall not...harshness**—will surely not abandon you to such an acrimonious behaviour, as has been shown by your sister.

174. **Do...burn**—*Cf.* "Timon of Athens" V. i. 134: "Thou sun, the comfortest burn." **In thee**—in your nature.

176. **To scant my sizes**—to diminish my allowances.

N.B. 'Size' is short for 'assize', a fixed quantity of bread etc., doled out to a dependant. "We find it used at a very early period, almost as a general word for 'provisions'. (Skeat : 'Etymological Dictionary')" The word 'sizar' meaning 'a scholar who obtained allowances from the college buttery-hatch,' current in the universities, preserves the word 'size' and its old meaning.

177. **To oppose**—to place before as an obstacle.

177-178. **To oppose...in**—to prevent my entering by closing the door.

179. **Offices of nature**—the duties, prompted by natural affections.

180. **Effects of courtesy**—actions, expressing courtesy.

182. **To th' purpose**—Let us come to the point, instead of killing your time in the 'sentimental appeals'.

180. **I know't**—*N.B.* Steevens quotes Iago's "The Moor! I know his trumpet" ("Othello," II. i. 180) and says : "It would seem from both these passages and others that might be quoted that the approach of great personages was announced by some distinguishing note or tune appropriately used by their own trumpeters." **Approves**—confirms what she mentioned in her letter.

186. **Easy......borrow'd pride**—"assumed with ease, counterfeited with an appearance of naturalness."—(Schmidt.) "Easy-going, coolly impudent."—(Craig.)

189. **Who stock'd my servant ?**—*N.B.* The very sight of Oswald reminds Lear of the humiliation to which Kent was put.

191-192. **If your......obedience**—If you in your benignant government of the world are well pleased with obedience.

192. **Allow**—approve of ; from the Latin, 'allaudare=to praise greatly : warmly approve of.

193. **Make it your cause**—uphold my cause taking it to be your own.

"When Lear calls upon the heavens to avenge his cause, 'for they are old like him,' there is nothing extravangant or impious in this sublime identification of his age with theirs ; for there is no other image which could do justice to the agonizing sense of his wrongs and his despair."—(Hazlitt.) **Send down**—*i.e.*, your agents ; messengers.

197-198. **All's not .....so**—When an indiscreet man looks upon an act as an offence and an enfeebled old man calls it so, it would not be an offence in real sense of the term.

198. **Dotage**—This word is favourite to Goneril for age. "It is her way of denying that age has dignity or deserts, and that it has a place in Nature ; she conceives of it only as a state which compels submission to her and her sister's desires."
—(Heilman.)

199-200. **O sides...,holds ?**—*Cf.* "Antony and Cleopatra," IV. xiv. 39-41 :

"O, cleave my sides !
Heart, once be stronger than thy continent,
Crack thy frail case !' (Cited by Deighton.)

200. **Yet hold**—*i.e.*, without being cracked.

201. **Disorders**—disorderly behaviour ; misconduct.

202. **Advancement**—promotion. Cornwall uses this word sarcastically, as if punishment were some sort of promotion.

203. **Seem so**—yield to be treated, as an old man, because of dotage should be.

207. **From**—away from. **Out of that provision**—without the means.

211. **To wage against**—wage war against ; contend.

213. **Necessity's sharp pinch**—the sad and cruel strait, which necessity reduces the wretched.

214. **Hot-blooded**—impetuous ; passionate.

216. **To knee**—*i.e.*, to kneel before. **Squire-like**—as though I were his squire or attendant.

217. **Afoot**—*i.e.*, on foot ; going.

218. **Sumpter**—a pack-horse ; but more probable, fitting the context is 'a pack-horse driver.'

N.B. Cf. Cotgrave's "French Dictionary" : 'Sommier,' a sumpter-horse, and generally any toiling and load-carrying drudge or groom.

225. **Needs**—necessarily ; old genitive used adverbially.

226. **A plague sore**—*N.B.* the plague referred to here is the bubonic plague of which there were outbreaks in London in 1582. **Embossed carbuncle**—inflamed ulcer swollen like a knob. Cotgrave's "French Dictionary—'embosser' to swell, or arise in bunches, hunches, knobs."

228. **Call**—invoke.

229. **The thunder-bearer**—Jupiter, whose weapon in classical mythology was the thunderbolt, described in Latin literature as 'Jove Tonans.'—Thundering Jove.' (Ovid.)

230. **High-judging**—the supreme judge.

234. **I look'd......yet**—I did not expect you to come until some more time elapses.

235. **Fit**—proper.

236. **Mingle reason......passion**—temper your passion with reason ; "dilute your passionate words with a little commonsense, examine them in the cold light of reason."—(Muir.)

237. **Must be......old**—must be content in taking all your headlong outbursts as the idiosyncrasies of your age.

239. **Avouch**—maintain.

247. **Chanc'd to slack ye**—happened to be apathetic or negligent in their services to you.

251. **Notice**—acknowledge ; give recognition to.

252. **Good time**—At the right time ; before it was too late.

253. **Guardians**—custodians. "Guardians under me of my realms." **Depositaries**—trustees of my power, legal sense.

254. **Reservation**—a saving clause.

258. **Well-favour'd**—handsome in character.

264. **What**—why.

267. **O ! reason...........need**—Don't argue what a man absolutely needs.

N.B.—"Observe the tranquillity, which follows the first stunning of the blow, permits Lear to reason"—Coleridge. Heilman thus comments on this speech : "Lear not only defines the effect upon humanity of the use of mere need as a measuring stick for prerequisites, but he shrewdly demonstrates that his daughters do not observe themselves the canon of need."

268. **Are in...superfluous**—However impoverished they might be, they have in their means possessions, something more than what is absolutely necessary; "in their poorest possession have something over and above what is necessary for bare existence"—(Craig.)

269-270. **Allow not.........beast's**—Let nature be allowed nothing more than what is inevitable for its maintenance, there would remain no distinction, as such, between the life of man and that of the beast.

271-273. **If only......warm**—If the clothes you wear make you look splendid and keep you warm......why nature has no need to wear such an attire as yours, which hardly keeps you warm, *i.e.*, the splendid dress, you wear, is not absolutely necessary to keep you warm and hence might wear it for some other reason.

273. **But for true need**—Lear wanted to explain how the true need is very much different from the perverted needs of a foppish woman, but at the moment his own need was urgent, *viz.*, of patience ; fortitude.

274. **Patience, patience I need**—Give me the patience which I need.

277. **Stirs**—a relative with a plural antecedent is often followed by a singular verb : see Abbott, § 247.

279. **To bear**—as to bear.

288. **Flaws**—fragments ; particles.

289. **Or ere**—before.

293. **Bestow'd**—lodged ; conveniently accommodated.

293. **Blame**—fault.

294. **Taste**—suffer.

295. **For his particular**—As far as he personally is concerned.

296. **So am I purpos'd**—I too have determined that.

299. **He calls to horse**—He has asked his attendants to mount and ride with him. *N.B.* 'To horse'—to horseback, to mounting a horse.

300. **'Tis best.........way**—Let him have his own way. **He leads himself**—he is his own guide ; "He insists on having his own way."—(Kittredge.)

302. **Alack**—alas. *N.B.* from Middle English 'lak'—loss, failure ; and ah : ah, a loss.—(Skeat.)

303. **Do sorely ruffle**—are terribly vociferous and turbulent. *Cf.* "Titus Andronicus", I. i. 318 : "To ruffle in the Commonwealth of Rome."

307. **With**—by. **Desperate train**—*i.e.*, a band of desperate followers. *N.B.* On the very face of it, Regan is unaware that Lear's followers have left him in the lurch ; maybe, she is finding some pretence for not sending after him.

308-309. **And what.........fear**—Prudence bids us fear the reckless deeds, he being instigated, might perpetrate, seeing how readily he listens to his evil advisers.

N.B. Heilman points out, Regan means by "wisdom," looking out for oneself. "Here a veritable exaggeration of cool sanity is transmuted into moral madness."

Bradley finds, "Lear" has much in common with "Timon of Athens" (1607) : "Famous passages in both plays are curses. The misanthropy of Timon pours itself out in a torrent of maledictions on the whole race of man ; and these at once recall alike, by their form and their substance, the most powerful speeches, uttered by Lear in his madness."

Act III : Scene I

Analysis. This scene brings us upon the heath, where Kent meets a gentleman of the King's train. The latter informs that the King is with the Fool and facing the turbulent furies of the "elements" ; the fool labouring "to outjest his heart-struck injuries". At this Kent entrusts the gentleman to a mission of going to Dover and meet Cordelia there so as to inform her of the King's maddening and unnatural sorrow. This shows that Kent is persistently endeavouring to keep Cordelia and the King of France informed of Lear's miserable

plight and of the developments in England. They also keep their vigilant eye on the developments of England through "the spies and speculations, intelligent of our state." At the close of the second scene of Act II, Kent has had a letter from Cordelia, "Who hath most fortunately been informed of my obscured course."

We are given to understand that an armed force from France has surreptitiously landed in some of the best seaports of England, "Wise in our negligence" and "at point to show their open banner." By a brilliant stroke, Shakespeare activates our imagination for the storm scenes, which are presently to follow—Lear striving,

> "......in his little world of man to out-storm
> The to-and-fro conflicting wind and rain."

This scene is significant in two ways—(i) It is a technical necessity to relieve the much-burdened audience of the emotional strain for a little while, Lear and his sufferings being withdrawn from their sight ; and (ii) As the main plot proceeds towards the climax, this scene is introduced, so as to prepare us for the catastrophe. The audience must note that the forces of retribution are already at work—off the stage.

Notes

2. **Minded**—inclined ; disposed.

4. **Elements**—*N.B.* Quarto reads 'element', which means air.

6. **Main**—mainland ; generally used by Shakespeare for the 'sea'.

7. **Things**—everything ; the order of the world. *Cf.* V. iii. 16, "The Mystery of Things" ; and "Macbeth", III. ii. 16 : "But let the frame of things disjoint, both the worlds suffer."

8. **Eyeless**—blind ; *Cf.* "the sightless couriers of the air" in Macbeth (I. vii. 24), meaning blind winds.

7-15. **Tears his white..............will take all**—*N.B.* these lines appear in Quarto ; while Folio omits them, which seems to be the cut of an actor.

9. **Make nothing of**—shows little reverence for. Heath interprets : "disperse to nothing as fast as he tears it off."

10. **His.........of man**—man, the microcosm ; represented in miniature ; '*mirocosm*'—a little universe or world, often applied to man, who war regarded by ancient philosophers as a model or epitome of the universe. **Out-storm**—Steevens quotes, "The Lover's Complaint " 7 :

"Storming her world with sorrows, wind and rain."

This line contains the same reference to the microcosm.

11. **To-and-fro conflicting**—blowing wayward, in a mad fury ; swaying about in mad, angry conflict.

12. **Cub-drown bear**—bear, sucked dry by its cubs and hence ravenous and ferocious out of hunger.

Unbonneted——with his head bare, uncovered. In Elizabethan times, bonnet might be applied indifferently to the head covering of either a man or a woman and the world still finds its vogue in Scotland in the sense of a man's hat or cap.

15. **And bids...............all**—abandoning himself to utter despair becoming desperate ; "explained as an exclamation of desperation which originated among gamblers, the losers bidding his rival 'take all' he had to stake"—(Verity.)

16-17. **Labours ....injuries**—by his wild and extravagant jokes persistently tries to drive out the injuries, which have pierced the King to his heart.

18. **Upon the......... ..note**—on the strength of my observation of you.

19. **Commend............you**—entrust you with a precious secret. **Division**—hostility ; enmity ; disunity.

20-21. **The face.................cunning**—they dissemble that hostility, so far as their apparent behaviour is concerned.

22-23. **As you have . ...high ?**—all those whom destiny has placed in an exalted position. **Who seem no less**—who by their appearance do not look less than servants, *i.e.*, spies.

24. **Speculations**—close observers ; speculators ; the use of abstract for the concrete.

25. **Intelligent...............state**—supplying information, in regard to the happenings here.

25-29. **What hath.........furnishings**—reporting everything that has been noticed by them, whether it be in the nature of offence taken by the one Duke against the other, or their plots or the cruel restraints they have on the kind, old King, or something still profounder than these of which these are possibly the outward symptom or appendages.

26. **Snuffs**—resentments ; quarrels. In Shakespearean English, "to take a snuff' would mean 'to become angry at a thing. **Packings**—intrigues ; plots.

27. **The hard......borne**—how unalterably firm, how stiff-necked they have been, following a cruel way.

29. **Furnishings**—the trimmings ; pretence ; appendages, not the things in themselves.

30. **A power**—a force ; an army.

31. **Scatter'd**—in a prevailing atmosphere of fissiparous tendencies.

32-33. **Wise in......ports**—who, adroitly taking the advantage of our apathy and negligence, have surreptitiously landed in some of our best sea-ports.

33. **At point**—on the point of.

34. **To show......banner**—to declare an open war, by unfurling their banner.

35-36. **If on......Dover**—If you can trust me so far as to hurry up for my sake to Dover. **My credit**—on the strength of my credit, having faith in me.

36. **Shall find**—will certainly find.

37—39. **Making just..... to plain**—when you submit a faithful report to Cordelia of the maddening grief of the King, caused by the unnatural behaviour of her two elder sisters. **To plain**—to complain of.

41-42. **And from...........to you**—on the strength of some absolutely reliable information I have, I entrust this mission to you.

43. **I will talk...........you**—the gentleman, prompted by misgivings in regard to the bona fides of Kent courteously declines to accept the mission proposed to him by Kent. **No, do not**—do not consent to go, until I furnish you with a substantial proof to make you rely on me.

45. **Out-wall**—exterior.

47. **And fear............shall**—and you certainly need not doubt, that you will.

48. **Fellow**—companion, associate.

49. **Fie on**—my curses on.

52. **To effect**—in their consequence, hence in importance or urgency. *N.B.* The Elizabethans used 'to' before nouns in the sense of 'with a view to', 'for an end', or to express motion. See Abbott, § 186.

53-54. **In which.........I'll this**—in which task of strenuous search for the King, your labour lies in that direction, while I will go in this.

55. **Holla the other**—let him shout to the other. *N.B.* It is remarkable that Kent on finding the King does not 'holla' the gentleman thereof.

ACT III : SCENE II

Analysis. Lear again appears upon another part of the heath and is accompanied by the Fool. Passion sweeps over him in gusts and gives vent to the torrent of words :

"Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks ! rage ! blow !"

It may be noticed that the pauses in the flow of his wrathful imprecations and denunciations are very much like the intervals, occurring in the blasts of the furious storm, in the midst of which he stands, "A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man". The terrible storm, continuing through most of this Act is symbolical, on the one hand, of the tempest in Lear's breast and of the great commotion in the moral world, on the other, leading to his misfortunes. Kent discovers him and persuades him to find shelter in the nearby hovel ; at which the King shrieks, "My wits begin to turn." For the Fool, he is compassionate by heart. With the Fool's prophecy the scene comes to an end.

This storm scene confronts us with a panorama of terror and sublimity, unrolling before our eyes twofold storms—the storm in the high heavens and the storm raging in Lear's mind. The pudder of the elements is but the symbol of the convulsive passion in Lear's mind. Its dramatic significance lies in so far as it leaves an impact on Lear's mind, and simultaneously it also serves as background and atmosphere. Not the storm but

Lear should dominate the entire scene. The actor impersonating Lear must "identify the storm "with him"—reflect the storm in Lear. Shakespeare with a marvellous stroke of his art, blends the two Lears into unity—(i) "The Lear, who is terribly great in our still immediate sense of his identity with the element," and (ii) "the Lear pathetic by contrast with the elements, an old man, breaking under the storm."

The Fool plays a significant part, in so far as he at once intensifies and lightens the pathos of Lear's Promethean agony.

Notes

1. **Blow......cheeks**—In classical poetry, the winds are personified and represented in sculpture as winged beings. Mason compared the common representation of the winds in old books and maps as figures with puffed-out cheeks. *Cf.* Coriolanus, V. iii. 151 :

"To tear with thunder the wide cheeks o'the air."

2. **Cataracts**—the great falls of water ; "Violent downpours of rain" ; the earliest meaning of the word being 'the flood-gates of the heaven.' **Hurricanoes** : water spouts. *N.B.* For 'hurricano' an early spelling of 'hurricane', in this sense, *cf.* "Troilus and Cressida", V. ii. 172 :

"The dreadful spout,
Which shipmen do the hurricano call."

3. **Cocks**—Weather-cocks ; a vane (often in the form of cock) on the steeples and towers of houses to show the direction of the wind.

4. **Thought-executing**—acting as swiftly as the thought itself, "doing execution with the rapidity; equal to thought" (Johnson) ; "executing the thought of him who casts you" (Moberly.)

5. **Vaunt-couriers**—Forerunners ; precursors ; harbingers ; from the Fr. *avant-coureur* ; originally the word meant the foremost scouts in an army. **Oak-cleaving thunderbolts**—a favourite image of Shakespeare. *Cf.* "Measure for Measure", II. ii. 115-16., "Coriolanus", V. iii., and 153., "Tempest", V. i. 44-46.

7. **Rotundity**—"This, in connection with what follows, suggests not only the sphere of the globe but the roundness of gestation"—(Delius.)

8. **Nature's moulds**—*i.e.* those in which nature casts and shapes creations.

8-9. **All germens.........man**—destroy at once all the seeds from which spring the ungrateful race of man. **All germens spill**—destroy the seeds of life.

10. **Court holy-water**—an old proverbial phrase for flattery, 'fair words'.

N.B. Malone cites Florio's Queen Anne's "New World of Words : "mautilzare, to flatter, to fawn upon, to court one with fair words, to give court holy water;" and Cotgrave's "French Dictionary, 'Eau beniste de court'=court holy water, fair words, flattering speeches, glossing, soothing, palpable cogging."

12. **Ask thy...............blessing**—ask a blessing from your daughters. **Pities**—that pities ; for the omission of the relative, see Abbott, § 244.

14. **Rumble**—make noise, as of a distant thunder. **Thy bellyful**—to your heart's content.

15. **Are my daughters**—"and therefore I cannot make a complaint of their treatment."—(Deighton.)

16. **Tax**—accuse ; bring a charge of something against.

18. **Subscription**—allegiance ; obedience ; submission.

19. **Your horrible pleasure**—whatever horrible sufferings you are pleased to rain on my head.

21. **Servile ministers**—slavish agents.

23. **High-engender'd battles**—battalions, brought forth and nurtured in the skies.

26. **Head : piece**—a helmet, a quibble (i) a helmet, a covering for the head, and (ii) a head, brain.

27-30. **The cod-piece......many**—The person, who satisfies his carnal desires, even before he has a house to live in, will eventually marry a woman and share her lice ; and there is nothing unusual about many a beggar marrying.

27. **Cod-piece**—"An ostentatiously indelicate part of the male dress which was put to several uses,—to stick pins in, to carry the purse in, etc."—(Dyce.)

30. **Beggars marry many**—"That is, a beggar marries a

wife and lice" (Johnson.) "Rather, so many beggars marry". The expression is proverbial.—(*Mason.*)

31—34. **The man that.....to wake**—"The man who cherishes a mean part of his body to the exclusion of what is really worth cherishing, shall suffer lasting harm and from the very part he so foolishly "cherished"—(*Muir.*)

N.B. The Fool sarcastically refers to Lear's folly in denouncing Cordelia and enriching Goneril and Regan.

35-36. **For there......glass**—The Fool seems to obliquely glance at the vanity, haughtiness and hypocrisy of Goneril and Regan. Making pretty faces in a mirror signifies the waywardness of their nature. Furness observes: "This is the Fool's way of diverting attention after he has said something a little too pointed; the idea of a very pretty woman making faces in a looking-glass raises a smile."

37-38. **I will be . ...nothing**—An echo of the old play, "The History of King Leir". In a soliloquy, the Courtier Perrilus (the counterpart of Kent) describes the plight of Leir:

> "But he, the myrrour or mild patience,
> Puts up all wrongs, and never gives reply."

40. **Grace**—The King's grace *i.e.* the King, or an honourable man. **Cod-piece**—Shakespeare has with some humour applied this name to the Fool who, for obvious reasons, was usually provided with this unseemly part of dress in a more remarkable manner than other persons."—(*Douse.*)

42. **Things that love night**—even those creatures who find the night time preferable for themselves.

44-45. **Gallow.........caves**—Terrify even the wild beasts, that prowl about at night, so as to keep themselves confined to their caves. **Wanderers of the dark**—the wild beasts.

46. **Bursts**—peals.

49. **Affliction**—"Affliction for infliction; the two being then equivalent. Man's nature cannot endure the infliction nor even the fear of it. So in the Prayer-Book: Defend us from all dangers and mischiefs, and from the fear of them."

50. **Pudder**—turmoil, uproar. *N.B.* The Quarto reads pother, which "appears......to be too ludicruous a word for the

passage." The word 'pudder' also occurs in Beaumont and Fletcher's "The Scornful Lady", II. ii :

"Some fellows would have cryed now, and have curst thee. And faln out with their meat and kept a pudder."

51. **Find......now**—*i.e.*, by the terror which such offenders must show.

52. **Undivulged crimes**—those crimes that have hitherto not been brought to light.

53. **Unwhipp'd......justice**—who have as yet escaped the scourging or the punitive hand of justice.

54. **Perjur'd**—a perjurer ; one who has falsely sworn. *N.B.* Quarto and Folio both read 'perjur'd.' But Theobald's reading 'perjure' (perjurer) gives better sense as well as rhyme with 'simular'. He cites "Love's Labour's Lost", IV. iii. 47: "He comes like a perjurer wearing papers." **Simular of virtue**—hypocrite ; a dissembler.

55. **Incestuous**—unchaste ; used in the etymolygical sense (Latin, *in*, not ; and '*cestus*,' chaste.) **Catiff**—wretch. **To pieces**—*i.e.*, in your terror.

56-57. **That......life**—who under an excuse of friendship favourable to their ends, has treacherously plotted against men's lives. **Convenient seeming**—appearance such as may promote his purpose to destiny ; the semblance of propriety. **Seeming**—hypocritical behaviour.

57. **Practis'd on**—plotted against. **Close pent-up guilts**—crimes or evil deeds, which have been locked up in men's bosoms, unrevealed to the world.

58-59. **Rive......grace**—Burst open the bosoms which contain and conceal you from being detected by the world, and cry for mercy from these dreadful ministers of vengeance, who summon you to justice. **Continents**—which contain ; hold. **Summoners**—officers who dragged offenders before the ecclesiastical courts.

59-60. **I am a......sinning**—Hence I, opposed to the hypocritical sinners, have nothing to fear from these 'dreadful summoners.' *N.B.* Tyrwhitt possibly has been the first to cite the Sophoclean parallel (Oedipus Coloneus) : "My deeds are rather deeds of suffering than doing." Schlegel observes :

"The principal characters here are not those who act, but those who suffer."

62. **Friendship**—shelter ; friendly service.

63. **Hard**—cruel.

65-66. **Which even......in**—The owners of which but a few minutes ago refused admission to me, when I made enquiry after you. **Which,** *i.e.*, the owners of which; or the people who dwell in it. **Demanding after you**—when I made enquiries after you. **Denied......in**—refused me admittance.

66-67. **Force......courtesy**—compel them to show that courtesy, which they have stinted so much.

67-73. **My wits......yet for thee**—From this point, then Lear enters on the stage wherein the mental disease begins to develop into insanity and later the assumed madness of Edgar by its contact, makes him fully insane. Furness quotes Doctor Bucknill :

"Insanity arising from mental and moral causes often continues in a certain state of imperfect development,...a state of exaggerated and perverted emotion, accompanied by violent and irregular conduct, but unconnected with intellectual aberration ; until some physical shock is incurred,—bodily illness, or accident or exposure to physical suffering ; and then imperfect type of mental disease is converted into perfect lunacy. We cannot doubt that Shakespeare contemplated this exposure and physical suffering as the cause of the first crisis in Lear's malady."

70. **The art......strange**—Necessity provides us with a wonderful skill to transform what is meanest into what is most valuable, just as alchemists turn base metals into gold.

"Need makes us wondrous alchemists."—(Craig.)

72-73. **I have......for thee**—despite my distractions and sufferings, I have a soft corner, full of compassion, for you.

74-77. **He that......every day**—Apparently an adaptation of Feste's song at the end of "Twelfth Night", V. i. 398 :

"When that I was and a little tiny boy,
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
A foolish thing was but a toy,
For the rain it raineth every day."

74. **And a**—"a mere expletive in popular songs"—(Schmidt). The words were obviously added for the sake of metre. According to Abbott, 'and' is used emphatically. **'And a ...wit'**—"a little and that a very little wit."

75. **Hey, ho**—common in the refrains of songs; expressive of joy, frolic, exultation or wonder.

76. **Must......fit**—must adapt himself to his fortunes and be satisfied with them.

78. **True**—Lear admits that he must make his happiness fit his fortunes. **Bring**—conduct.

79-96. **This is......before his time**—These lines are not found in Quartos, and seem to be an interpolation of an actor, who should have introduced them into the stage copy, wherefrom they found their way into the Folio text. The couplets are a parody of some old verses called "Chaucer's prophecy," though in reality Chaucer did not write them. There is in the Bodleian (as Skeat pointed out in a letter to the "A the nacum", 19th December, 1896) a MS. copy of this prophecy, bearing the heading "Prophecia Merlini doctoris Perfecti." Pope in one of his satires ("To Augustus") speaks of it as "Merlin's prophecy."

79. **Brave**—suitable ; fair.

81. **When......matter**—when the sermons of priests lack substance and suffer verbosity.

83. **Are......tutors**—teach them how to fashion garments.

84. **No.........suitors**—"The disease to which wenches' suitors are particularly exposed was called in Shakespeare's time the brenning or burning."—(Johnson.) *N.B.* There is a quibble on the word 'burn'd'.

86. **Nor no poor knight**—when no knight is poor.

89. **Tell**—count.

90. **Churches build**—as a sign of repentance.

91. **Realm of Albion**—England.

94. **Going......feet**—that man shall he walking upon their feet.

95. **Merlin**—Merlin, of course, is the famous wizard and the soothsayer of the Arthurian legends. Shakespeare's knowledge about Merlin's prophecies is based on Holinshed. In

Henry IV (Part I), III. i. 150, Shakespeare refers to the dreamer Merlin and his prophecies. The allusion here seems to be a gag, though some try to explain by considering it due to the fact that Lear was supposed to be "contemporary with Joash, King of Judah." In his "Shakespeare and his Popular Dramatic Tradition," Bethell points out that the Fool's concluding remark makes him step out of the remote period as a contemporary.

ACT III : SCENE III

Analysis. Gloucester speaks to Edmund that he extremely disliked "this unnatural dealing," shown towards the King. He then refers to the "division between the Dukes" and that he received a letter telling him, a part of the armed forces of France already landed, so as to avenge the King. He enjoins on Edmund to keep the Duke busy lest he should smell of his charitable behaviour to the King, for he determines to make the final sacrifice, but "the King, my old master, must be relieved." Edmund instantaneously resolves upon using this information to supplant his father; just as he had, with his crooked designs, supplanted his brother Edgar, earlier.

The scene is significant, as it strongly interweaves the threads of the main story and those of the underplot. It also relieves the tragic tension, by marking a lull in the furious storm. The underplot is advanced a further stage, so as to be quite closely connected with the main plot.

Notes

2. **When......pity him**—When I showed them my desire to 'relieve' him (*i.e.*, the King).

3. **Charg'd**—enjoined on me ; warranted me.

5. **Sustain him**—provide him with sustenance ; care for.

7. **Go to**—never mind about that.

8. **A worse matter**—*i.e.*, the landing of the French armed forces.

10. **Closet**—private cabinet.

11. **Revenged home**—will be thoroughly avenged.

12. **Power**—armed force. **Incline to**—range ourselves on the side of ; espouse the side of ; show our favour to.

13. **Look him**—make a search for him; seek for him. **Relieve him**—*i.e.*, relieve his wants.

16. **As no less......me**—and no less than this penalty seems to threaten me.

16-17. **My old......reliev'd**—"Gloucester's motives are a curious mixture: pity of the King and fear that he will come in to his own again and have his revenge, or at any rate be avenged by Cordelia."—(Verity.)

18. **Toward**—impending; about to happen.

19-20. **This courtesy......too**—This courtesy or charitable behaviour, you propose to show to the King, has been forbidden to you and of which as well as of that letter, the Duke shall take a note instantaneously.

21. **A fair deserving**—a good turn, expressive of my gratitude to Cornwall and Regan and be handsomely rewarded by them.

21-22. **Draw me......all**—entitle me to that which my father forfeits, his title as well as all his belongings.

ACT III : SCENE IV

Analysis. Lear is led by Kent to the hovel, where the King in his agony reveals a profound truth:

> "........where the greater malady is fix'd,
> The lesser is scarce felt."

He regrets that little could he do for the "Poor naked wretches," while he was vested with power and prosperity. The poor Tom cries from within the hovel, at which the Fool is frightened. Edgar joins the company. Here, for the first time, in a hallucination, Lear imputes the miserable plight of Edgar to the ungratefulness of his daughters and this he persistently maintains. Lear finds this new companion intimately dear to his heart and calls him variously, "noble philosopher", "learned Theban", "good Athenian." It is no surprise to Gloucester to find that the King's "wits begin to unsettle," and moreover he tells Kent that he too was a victim of "filial ingratitude," which crazed his wits and turned him mad.

The significance of this scene is quite obvious as the main plot reaches its climax in it. Lear's insanity is brought to a head by contact with the feigned madness of Edgar. The climax is also sustained through this scene and scene VI. In

the last scene Edmund, the villain of the sub-plot, was brought closer to the villainous characters of the main plot, and in this scene the unity of the two plots is further strengthened by bringing the sufferers or victims of the both together, *viz.*, Edgar and Lear. The wistful pathos and whimsical humour of the Fool's jesting diversifies the tone of these scenes and relieves their tragic intensity and thereby allows the emotionally-strained audience to relax. The remarks of Bradley and Coleridge about this scene are worth quoting here :

(i) "The effect of these scenes depends largely on the presence of three characters, and on the affinities and contrasts between them ; on our perception that the differences of station in King, Fool, and beggar-noble, are levelled by one blast of calamity, but also on our perception of the differences between these three in one respect, *viz.*, in regard to the peculiar affliction of insanity. The insanity of the King differs widely in its nature from that of the Fool and that of the Fool from that of the beggar."—(Bradley).

(ii) "O, what a world's convention of agonies is here ! All external nature in a storm, all moral nature convulsed,—the real madness of Lear, the feigned madness of Edgar, the babbling of the Fool, the desperate fidelity of Kent—surely such a scene was never conceived before or since. Take it but as a picture for eye only, it is more terrific than any which a Michael Angelo could have executed. Or let it have been uttered to the blind, the howlings of nature would seem converted into the voice of conscious humanity."—(Coleridge).

Notes

2-3. **The tyranny......endure**—Exposure to such a turbulent and tyrannical storm in this pitched darkness of the night is beyond human nature to face.

4. **Wilt......heart**—Steevens suggest that Lear is addressing his own heart, but; the speech that follows makes the meaning clear. Lear fondly thinks that by remaining outside in the storm, he will have his thoughts distracted from the filial ingratitude, which will otherwise break his heart.

7. **Much**—something terrible ; too hard to bear.

9-10. **But where......felt**—*cf.* "Cymbeline", IV. ii. 243 :

"Great griefs medicine the less."

N.B. "Lear enunciates a truth often observed in compound diseases."—(Dr. Bucknill).

10-12. **Though 'ldst......... . mouth**—Similarly Antigonus in "Winter's Tale" :

"Flying from the sea meets the bear in the mouth."

12. **Free**—at ease ; unconcerned ; free from cares and anxieties.

13. **Delicate**—highly susceptible to pain and exasperations.

15. **Save............there**—While uttering the last word Lear strikes his breast.

N.B. The quibble on the play 'beats' : (i) the restless throbbing of his heart out of distress ; and (ii) lashing of the tempest outside.

17. **I will punish home**—My punishment of them will be condign.

21. **Frank**—generous ; benevolent ; open.

22. **O ! that......lies**—but let me cease brooding of that or it will drive me mad.

27. **Things would**—*i.e.*, things which would.

28. **You houseless poverty**—you poverty-struck, houseless wretch.

31. **Bide**—endure.

32. **Unfed sides**—beneath which the ribs, suggestive of starvation, are visible.

33. **Loop'd and window'd raggedness**—ragged clothing, full of holes and openings. *Cf.* "I. Henry IV", IV. i. 171 :

"And stop all sight-holes every loop."

34-35. **O ! I have......this**—While I was King, vested with power and prosperity, I little cared for the miserable plight of the poor.

37. **Shake**—"seems to convey the idea of the crumbs scattered from the rich man's table."—(Deighton). **Superflux**—*i.e.*, your superfluous or surplus possessions ; what you have in excess of your needs.

39. **Fathom and half**—Edgar speaks like a sailor who is casting the lead for measuring the depths of the seas.

48. **Through......winds**—presumably a scrap from the old ballad in Percy's "*Reliques*" :

> "Through the hawthorn blows the cold wind,
> And drizzly rain doth fall."

49. **Humh !**—Armstrong points out, "Shakespeare uses this word in twenty contexts and in twelve of these there is death or sleep imagery," **Go to thy cold bed**—to go cold to bed ; similarly "to rise from a naked bed" meant "to get up naked from bed."—(Staunton).

50. **Didst......daughters ?**—Empson thus comments : "Madness has come. No doubt the appearance of wild Edgar......is the accident that made him unable to shun it any longer."

52. **Gives**—Edgar takes his cue from Lear's 'give' (*l. 50*).

54. **Quagmire**—marshy tract with quaking surface ; swamp.

55. **Hath laid......pew**—to tempt him to commit suicide.

N.B. Here Shakespeare is indebted to Harsnet's Declaration of Popish Impostures," wherein we find a story, told upon oath by a maid-servant, that apothecary had left "a new halter and two blades of knives" on the floor of the gallery of her master's house. When she went with him to the gallery and saw the knives and halter he professed not to be able to see them, and when she took them and held them out to him, he said, "Ah, now I see them indeed, but before, I could not see them ; and therefore I perceive that the devil hath laid them here to work some mischief upon you that are possessed." It was alleged that the apothecary wished to persuade the girl that she was possessed by demons, and "it was reported that the devil laid them (*i.e.* the halter and knives) in the gallery that some of those who were possessed might either hang themselves with the halter or kill themselves with the knives." **Pew**—was not always used for an enclosed seat in the church ; for example, Pepys in his Diary for 15th and 17th Feb. 1669, employs 'pew' for seats, lying in a theatre. Literally it means 'an elevated place'.

56. **Rat-bane by his porridge**—poison close to his dish of broth ; so as to induce him to put some into it.

57. **To ride........bridges**—stimulated his pride to perilous ventures. **Trotting-horse**—"a horse trained to trot and amble

in a stately and measured fashion, and used by great persons in public entries to towns. Other names are a foot-cloth horse, a cloth-sell horse, an ambling gelding. These names are often associated with the idea of excessive pride and pomp." (Craig).

54. **To course.........traitor**—to chase his own shadow, as if it were a traitor. **Thy five wits**—They are enumerated, on an analogy of five senses, in Haves' "Pastime of Pleasure", they are (i) common wit, (ii) imagination, (iii) fantasy, (iv) estimation, and (v) memory.

59. **Do de, do de, do de**—He is presumably shivering, and chatters his teeth.

60. **Star-blasting**—the evil influence, supposed to be exercised by the constellations. **Taking**—infection.

61-62. **There could...........and there**—In his fancy, Edgar perceives the foul fiend is catching at him.

67-68. **ow Nall......faults**—Schmidt compares "The Birth of Merlin", formerly attributed to Shakespeare :

"Knowest thou what pendulous mischief roofs thy head." **Pendulous**—overhanging ; impending. **Hang fated**—hang, as if they were decreed by fate to fall over ; "fated"—invested with the power of fatal determination.

69. **Subdu'd nature**—reduced his natural powers.

70. **Unkind**—heartless ; unnatural.

72. **Should.........flesh ?**—Edgar's wretchedness with pins and thorns in his flesh. Clark refers to the exposure of the body to the storm, while Delius refers to the sticking of pins in the mortified bare arms.

72. **Judicious**—presumably used in the sense of 'judicial'.

74. **Pelican daughters**—greedy or cruelly rapacious daughters.

N.B. It alludes to the current belief that the young of the pelican fed on the blood of their mother. It is reminiscent of the old play, wherein Lear says :

"I am as kind as the pelican
That kills itselfe to sure her young ones' lives."

Lear seems to go further and imply that the young pelicans strike at the breasts of the old ones to drain their lives out.

75. **Pillicock sat.................hill**—Collier quotes Ritson's,

"Gammar Gurton's Garland" :

> "Pillicock Pillicock sat on a hill,
> If he's not gone he sit there still."

'Pillycock' was a flattering word for a young boy, a term of endearment, meaning 'darling', 'pretty knave'.

76. **Alow......too**—"a cry to excite dogs"—(Craig).

> "A wild 'halloo' as if he were calling a hawk."
> —(Kittredge).

78-80. **Obey thy......proud array**—*N.B.* Edgar recites a kind of catechism in these lines. **Keep......justice**—"be as just in deeds as in words." (Schmidt). **Commit not**—don't commit adultery. **Set... array**—"Do not allow your affections to fix themselves upon gorgeous clothes ;" the expression seems equivalent to 'set not your heart sweetly upon'.

83. **Serving-man**—in the ordinary sense 'servant' ; but here it has been used to mean 'a fashionable lover', which suits the context better ; a lover or a cavaliere servente one who serves a mistress.

84. **Curl'd my hair**—a gay dandy ; like a foppish gallant **Wore gloves......cap**—In Shakespeare's time the gloves of a mistress were worn by a lover as a token of her favour.

87. **Contriving**—plotting, presumably while he was sleeping.

90. **Light of ear**—too ready to believe ; "Credulous of ear, ready to receive malicious reports."—(Johnson).

90-91. **Hog in.........prey**—Skeat points out that in the "Ancrean Riwle", the seven deadly sins are typified by seven wild animals : (i) the lion, type of pride ; (ii) the serpent, type of envy ; (iii) the unicorn, type of wrath ; (iv) the bear, of sloth ; (v) the fox, of covetousness ; (vi) the swine, of greediness ; and (vii) the scorpion, of lust.

92. **Creaking of shoes**—which was highly fashionable.

94. **Plackets**—slits or openings in a petticoat ; also used as a synonym for 'Wench'. **Lenders**—money-lenders.

96. **Hey no nonny**—presumably the burden of an old song ; intended to imitate the whisper and moaning of the wind.

97. **Dolphin my boy**—perhaps a snatch from an old ballad

or a song ; 'Dolphin' for Dauphin. **Sessa !**—presumably a mere interjection ; or an incitement to speed. Johnson thought it was the Fr. word '*cessez*', pronounced 'cessey', and meaning "be quiet, have done." The context suggests "Off you go".
—(Muir).

98. **Thou wert better**—it would be better for you to be. **Answer**—encounter ; confront ; bear the brunt.

99. **Extremity**—extreme rigour ; terrific ordeal.

100-105. **Thou ow'st......you lendings**—Muir cites from Florio's "Montaigne", "Man is the onely forsaken and outcast creature naked on the bare earthe......having nothing to cover and arme himselfe with all but the spoile of others ; whereas Nature hath clad and mantled all other creatures, some with huskes......with woolle............with hides............and with silke.........whereas man only (oh ! silly wretched man) can neither goe, nor speake, nor shifte, nor feed himselfe; unlesse it be to whine and weepe onely, except hee be taughte."

100-101. **Thou......silk**—You are not under obligation to the silk-worm for your dress. **Beast**—*i.e.*, the ox ; or a similar animal.

102. **Cat**—the civet cat, the perfume obtained from which was greatly popular even until the poet Cowper's day. **Sophisticated**—adulterated ; not the genuine orginal of nature but a spurious substitution. *N.B.* Shakespeare does not use the word elsewhere.

103. **Unaccommodated**—Without being furnished with the adjuncts of civilized life ; unprovided with the amenities of civilized life, such as clothes ; "not bettered by the effects of civilization."—(Craig).

104. **Forked**—two-legged ; *Cf.* Falstaff's comparison of shallow to "a forked radish with a head fantastically curved upon it." ("2. Henry IV"—III. ii. 334).

105. **Lendings**—borrowed articles, after all, as clothes are. **Unbutton......here**—Lear fantically desires to establish an identity between him 'and the poor naked wretches, the unaccommodated men'.

106-107. **'Tis a.........swim in**—it would be too wicked a night to bathe in its downpour. **Fire**—Lear happened to see the torch of Gloucester.

108. **Old lecher's**—Muir comments that the Fool does not know that he is speaking of Gloucester, though the audience from the previous scene expects his arrival.

109. **Look !......fire**—It refers to Gloucester, approaching with a torch in his hand.

110. **Flibbertigibbet**—This as well as most of the other names of fiends in the play (such as Smulkin, Modo, Mahu, Frateretto etc.) are found in Harsnet's "Declaration". 'Flibbere tigibbet' in the time of Shakespeare, became 'fleberg-bet' which meant gossiping or garrulous woman.

110-111. **He begins........cock**—According to the medieval and Elizabethan superstition the ghosts and spirits can walk from curfew (fixed evening hour, when the bells ring) to cock-crow (about midnight). 'Walks' is a technical term for the appearance of spirits and ghosts.

111-112. **The web and the pin**—an old term for the disease of the eye—*viz*., cataract.

112. **Squenes the eye**—causes a squint in the eye. **The hare-lip**—a fissure in the upper human lip, like that of a hare.

112-113. **Mildews........wheat**—blights the white wheat; 'white' refers to variety as against 'red.'

114-118. **Swithold......aroint thee**—These lines are presumably a popular charm of incantation against the Night-mare. It may thus be explained : St. Vitalis traversed the world three times, met the Nightmare and her nine familiars disguised as foals, commanded her to alight from the foal she was riding and give her a solemn pledge that she would not molest any one, and thereafter asked her to betake herself off. **Swithold**—St. With-hold, usually identified with St. Vitalis who was supposed to protect against the nightmare. **Night-mare**—the incubus, a demon, supposed to cause horrible dreams with pressure on the chest ; from the old English '*night*—'night' ; and '*mar*'—'crush.' **Her nine-fold**—"Her nine familiars in the form of foals'.—(C. H. Herford) ; 'fold' for foal is presumably to serve the purpose of rhyming with 'old'. "Her nine imps or familiars"—(Capell.) **Her troth plight**—pledge her truth, for indulging in mischiefs no more. **Aroint**—avaunt ; begone ; presumably from the old English word 'arunt', to drive away."

124. **Wall-neut**—lizard ; *Cf.* old English 'efeta'—a lizard. **The water**—the water-newt.

126. **Sallets**—as a substitute for salads. **Ditch-dog**—dog, fallen into a ditch.

127. **Green.........pool**—the filthy scum on the surface of standing water ; called duck-weed' too.

128. **Whipp'd......to tithing**—a tithing was a district said to be constituted by ten families. Under the statute of 1597, the "vagabonds be whipped and sent from Parish to Parish," until they determined to go and did go to their own. **Stock-punish'd**—punished by being put into public stocks.

129. **Three suits**—*Cf.* note under II. ii. 14.

131-132. **But mice...............year**—Capell cites the old romance of "Sir Bevis of Hamptoun" :

> "Rattes and myce and suche smal dere,
> Was his mete that seuen yere."

Deer—game.

134-136-137. **Smulkin ; Modo ; Mahu**—see note under "Flibbertigibbet" line 110 (p. 455).

136. **A gentleman**—said in an affected resentment at Gloucester's question (line 135).

138. **Our flesh and blood**—our children.

139. **Gets**—begets.

138-139. **Our flesh......it**—Cowden Clarke comments thus : "Some tone or infection in Edgar's voice has reached the father's heart, and bitterly recalls the supposed unfilial conduct of his elder son and he links it with that of Lear's daughters."

147. **Philosopher**—presumably it means a natural scientist ; or a stoic apathetic to pleasure as well as pain.

148. **What.........thunder ?**—A favourite question with the ancient philosophers. Edmund Blunden suggests, this question involves "not only the academic interest of Lear, his notion 'of poor Tom' and the weather, but some allusion to the clash of hot and cold, of his own ardent love confronted with the marble-hearted ingratitude of his daughters."

"Being so 'unsophisticated'—having so completely reduced mankind to their element, surely this man must have a spon-

taneous insight into the nature of things, such as would at least tell him what is the cause of thunder."—(Moberly.)

149. **Th' house**—presumably refers to the farm house, near Gloucester's castle.

150. **Learned Theban**—Edmund Blunden's interpretation is quite convincing to these cryptic words. Lear, in line 173, changes 'learned Theban' to 'good Athenian'. Poor Tom's 'riding over four-inched bridges' and other visions raised by his auto-biography, and his ravings about Modo and Mahu make Lear recall a passage in the first Epistle of the Second Book of Horace, which in translation means : That is the poet for me, the man who can walk the whole-tight-rope of his art, the man who distresses me with imaginings, who angers, comforts, fills me with unreal horror like a wizard who makes me be at Thebes one minute and the next at Athens."

151. **What is your study ?**—What specific problems you brood on ?

152. **Prevent**—employ preventive measures against. **Vermin**—the foul ; properly a name for obnoxious insects or injurious animals ; a contemptible person.

153. **Let......private**—Lear wants an expert advice on how to kill vermin—his ungrateful daughters.

160. **Now......blood**—"When I have disinherited and disowned as my son."—(Deighton). **He sought my life**—*N.B.* Shakespeare gives Edgar a chance to know at first hand from his own father, the reason of his cruel treatment for him. Edgar now sees that the old man has been duped by the crooked designs of his brother. His wrath instantly vanishes, quickening his filial affection, so as to pave the way for altered relation.

164. **Cry......mercy**—I cry to you for mercy ; excuse me ; I beg you pardon. Lear courteously declines Gloucester's request, which signifies his reluctance in foregoing the company of 'the noble philosopher'.

168. **With him**—Lear implies that he would enter but not without being accompanied by Edgar.

170. **Soothe him**—humour him.

173. **Good Athenian**—see note under "learned Theban" (line 150).

175. **Rowland**—Roland, Charle-Magne's nephew, and the hero of Browning's "The Song of Roland" and other poems.

175-177. **Child ....man**—Dyce thinks that all the three lines are from one ballad, of which fragments of a Scottish version have been preserved by Jamieson in "Illustration of Northern Antiquities" (1814). In these fragments occur the lines :

"With fi, fi, fo, and fum !
I smell the blood of a Christian man."

'Blood' here means watchword, not of child Roland but of the giant on the tower. E. Yardley (cited by Muir) attempts to associate Rowland and the Giant. Helen was carried off by a sea-monster and immured in an enchanted castle. Her brother, Childe Rowland, traversed the seas in quest of her. She concealed him during the temporary absence of the monster. But the monster, when he returned, smelt the blood of a Christian man.

175. **Child**—*i.e.*, Knight ; commonly used in this sense in ballads. "In the old times of chivalry the noble youth who were candidates for Knighthood, during the time of their probation were called 'Infans,' 'Varlets,' 'Damoysels,' 'Bacheliers.' The most noble of the youth were particularly called infens." (Warburton.)

177. **British man**—The substitution of 'British man' for 'Englishman' (which occurs in Nashe's pamphlet, "Have with you to Safforn Walden," 1596 : "I smell the blood of an Englishman") points to the time when, under James I, the name of England was merged in the more general title of 'Great Britain.'

ACT III : SCENE V

Analysis. Cornwall and Edmund meet in a room of Gloucester's castle. The hapocritical Edmund pretends to feel sorry for his allegiance getting better of his filial affection, in discovering the treacherous deed of his father, whom he calls "an intelligent party to the advantage of France." Cornwall is convinced of whatever Edmund said, and tells him, 'that act of loyalty made him the Earl of Gloucester'. Further, Cornwall wants Edmund to search out his father, so that he may be ready for being arrested by him.

This scene is adroitly interposed to lower the tragic tone

and it also serves another purpose, *viz.*, it prevents the growth of Lear's insanity from becoming too rapid and too oppressive to the audience. The action comes back to the villain of the sub-plot, Edmund, who crowns his villainy by the betrayal of his father. Coleridge thus comments :

"The intervention of the fifth scene is particularly judicious, —the interruption allowing an interval for Lear to appear in full madness in the sixth scene."

Notes

1. **Revenge**—*i.e.*, upon Gloucester for his breach of allegiance, by assisting the King.

2-4. **How.........think of**—How the world will judge of me for thus allowing my loyalty to you, get better of my filial affection, is something the very thought of which frightens me. **Censured**—judged. **Nature**—filial feelings, implanted in me by nature. **Fears me**—frightens me somewhat ; *N.B.* An impersonal construction.

5-8. **I now...... ......in himself**—I now discern from this testimony to your allegiance that it was not merely your brother's naturally evil disposition, that made him seek his father's life, but a virtue on your part, roused by your horror of his reprehensible wickedness, which incited to that fatal determination. **A provoking merit**—virtue or worthiness, apt to be provoked.

9-10. **How.......be just**—How cruelly unjust the fortune has been to me in making me regret for the righteous deed in having revealed my father's treachery.

11. **An intelligent party**—It may have two meanings :—

(i) One who had secret intelligence or information about the landing of the French army, or

(ii) One who acted as a spy, conveying informations surreptitiously to the French King.

"One who was aware of, and collusive to, the advantages which France has gained, *i.e.*, the landing of the French army on our coasts."—(Deighton).

12. **Were not**—had not been perpetrated.

12-13. **Or not........detector**—and since it is perpetrated, it would have been much better, had I not been the discoverer.

16. **Mighty business**—one demanding the use of all his skill and energy.

19. **For our apprehension**—ready to be seized by us. .

21. **Stuff.........fully**—strengthen or confirm his suspicion to a great degree.

22. **Persevere—continue**.

23. **Blood**—natural feelings as a son ; natural temperament.

ACT III : SCENE VI

Analysis. The King is brought to the friendly farm-house, adjoining the castle, for which Kent expresses his deep gratitude to Gloucester. Then occurs the mock trial of the ungrateful daughters, in which Edgar and the Fool act as "justicers," so called by the King in his insanity. Lear takes rest and thereafter the Fool tells us "And I'll go to bed at noon." Saying so he departs once for all, *i.e.*, he no more appears in this play after this scene. Gloucester re-enters with the tidings in regard to the vicious plot of death of the King, who, still asleep, borne off on his way to Dover.

This scene is virtually a continuation of Scene IV, the climax in the action being sustained. The interval of Scene V has served the purpose of ripening of the King's insanity. The feigned madness of Edgar, the babblings of the Fool and the real madness of Lear are again brought together and contrasted as well. Lear's madness now is an acute mania, and the terrible passion of the earlier scenes is very well replaced by a situation which is intensely pethetic ; which finds Lear completely deranged, with an almost childish imbecility, in which the mind is constantly obsessed by an incessant recollection of the circumstances causing this derangement. Edgar finds it pretty hard to sustain his idiocy, with occasional gleams of relevance and sense, in face of the genuine insanity of Lear. "Poor Tom, thy born is dry," after all how long shall he sustain that assumed part. The professional gibes of the Fool, himself mentally weak, emphasize the suffering of the other two.

Notes

1. **Take it thankfully**—"Make the best of the change."

2. **Piece out**—supply deficiencies ; eke out.

4. **Have**—plural, because of its proximity with 'wits.'

4-5. **Given...........impatience**—has driven himself crazy; through his inability to bear the strain of the unjust dealings.

6. **Frateretto**—One of the fiends, occurring in Harsnet's "Declaration."

6-7. **Nero .....Darkness**—*N.B.* Rabelais in his "History of Gargantua" says that Nero played on a hurdy-gurdy in hell, and Trajan was an angler (for frogs). Actors substituted Nero for Trajan, the latter being considered too good a prince for such a vile employment. **Lake of Darkness**—Edith Sitwell in his, "A Note Book on William Shakespeare" suggests : "the lake of darkness" means "the bottomless depths of human nature." **Pray, innocent**—addresses the Fool; 'innocent' is used in the sense of fool; simpleton.

12—14. **No.........before him**—It is said that Shakespeare obtained from the "Herald's College" a Coat-of-arms in his father's name, thus getting his yeoman father dubbed a gentleman, so that he too might inherit his rank. Schmidt suggests a quibble on 'mad' and 'made'. **To his son**—for his son.

15-16. **To have......... upon 'em**—Presumably Lear's thoughts run upon his ungrateful daughters and he devises punishment to inflict upon them; such as to visualize them suffering in hell. **Hizzing**—This form of hissing "suggests the whizzing sound of the red hot weapons as they are to be brandished by a thousand assailants."—(Kittredge).

17—56. **The foul find.........let her 'scape**—Quarto gives these lines whereas the Folio omits them, probably due to the difficulty of rendering the scene without making it grotesque.

"I suppose that it was omitted in the acting version of the play, the mock trial being one of those daring pieces of imaginativeness, which on the stage become perilously akin to the grotesque or even comic. 'The Lear of Shakespeare cannot be acted', said Charles Lamb, and this seems to be one of the scenes that give colour to his remark. At any rate the part of Lear, here requires supreme capacity in the actor, if the tragic effect is to be maintained."—(Verity).

19. **Horse's health**—presumably the account of his condition, as given by the seller; the horses were supposed, above all other animals, liable to diseases. *Cf.* the proverb : "Trust not a horse's heels, nor a dog's tooth".

20. **Arraign**—Lear, forgetting his earlier intention to use armed force, now decides to bring his daughters on a trial. R. Peacock, in his "The Poet in the Theatre" comments on the trial thus :

"Lear, scarcely rescued from the fury of nature, his ideas scattered by suffering, conducts a trial of his daughters. It is an illumination that produces from the sub-conscious the effects of order. At the moment of greatest breakdown we are given a judgment that represents amidst chaos the memory of civilization. Moral assumptions are at the centre of tragedy."

21. **Justicer**—administrator of justice ; justice.

N.B. Mc Elwaine says that this is a corruption of "justiciar", a high officer in the time of William I, who took the king's place when he was abroad.

22. **Sapient**—wise, sagacious, discerning.

22-23. **She-foxes**—Schmidt takes 'foxes' as the emblems of ingratitude, whereas Deighton prefers the ordinary sense of 'cunning'.

24-25. **Look where......madam ?**—"Look where the find stands and glares ! Do you want eyes to gaze at and admire you during your trial, madam ? The finds are there to serve your purpose."—(Clarke).

26. **Come......me**—presumably form an old song in which a lover calls upon his sweetheart to come to him across a stream. Wager quotes from the same song :

"Com ouer the Boorne Besse
My little pretie Besse,
Com ouer the Boorne to me."

Bourn—brook ; burn.

27—29. **Her boat......to thee**—The Fool improvises these lines.

30. **The.....voice**—Edgar pretends that Fool's singing is that of foul fiend, disguised as nightingale.

31. **Hoppendance**—Harsnet's form is 'Hobberdidance.' **Cries**—his stomach, being empty, rumbles.

32. **White herring**—fresh herring with their silvery scales, or pickled herring. *N.B. Cf.* Nashe, "Lentern Stuff" : "a

white-pickled herring ! Why, it is meat for a prince." **Croak**—to make a rumbling sound in the stomach.

34. **Amaz'd**—dumbfounded; terror-stricken.

36. **Their trial**—"This imaginary trial is conducted in a manner showing perfect familiarity with criminal procedure. Lear places the two judges on the bench, mad Tom and the Fool. He properly addresses the former as 'the robed man of justice,' but although both were 'of the commission'......why the latter is called his 'yoke-fellow of equity,' unless this might be supposed to be a special commission, like that which sat on Mary, Queen of Scots, including Lord Chancellor Audley."
—(Campbell).

Their evidence—those who are prepared to testify against them.

37. **Robed man of justice**—Edgar in his blanket, for his judicial robe.

38. **Yoke-fellow of equity**—fellow judge of the commission.

39. **Bench**—*i.e.*, take your seat on the bench. **O' th' Commission**—commissioned as a justice.

42-45. **Sleepest or** .....**no harm**...presumably fragment or an adaptation of an old ballad or song.

44. **For one blast**—*i.e.*, on his shepherd's pipe. "If only you will blow one strain on your pipe, your precious sheep will leave the cornfield, whatever damage they may have done." —(Kitteridge). **Minikin**—delicate ; dainty ; well-fashioned.

N.B. It was also a musical term, as in the apocryphal Marlowe poem :

N.B. It was also a musical term, as in the apocryphal Marlowe poem :

"I can not lisp, nor to some fiddle sing,
Nor run upon a high stretched minikin."

46. **Purr**—perhaps the name of a demon ; in Harsnet's "Declaration" we have: "Purre went out in a little whirlwind." But the word may also be the imitation of a noise made by a rat. **The cat grey**—"the mouse ought to remember that the cat is just as hard to see in the dark as the mouse herself."—(Moberly.)

52. **I took you for a joint-stool**—A proverbial expression, and means 'I took you for the bench not a prisoner.' The proverb is found in Ray's "Proverbs." "Joyned stool ; a low

stool with three or four legs fitted into it, made by a joiner, as distinguished from a carpenter who works more on the rough."
—(Muir).

53. **Warp'd**—perverse; unnatural; distorted by evil passions; literally 'twisted.'

54. **Store**—"material stock"—(Craig.) **Stop her there !**—Lear fancies that Goneril is trying to escape while the eyes of his fantasy are turned to Regan. "He is always more concerned with Goneril, knowing her to be the greater, more daring wrong-doer (and so more likely to escape).—(Verity).

55. **Corruption in the palace!**—What! has the corruption crept into the very seat of justice?

58. **Sir......now**—refers to III. ii. 37-38:

"No, I will be the pattern of all patience;
I will say nothing.

59. **To retain**—of retaining.

60. **Tears**—signifying an intense sympathy.

61. **They mar my counterfeiting**—make it too hard for me to keep up my assumed part.

62-63. **The little......at me**—Lear fancies that he is again riding to the hounds, as of old. This time, he is following Goneril, who has escaped. "How pathetic a touch is it that Lear thinks that even his old favourites have caught the infection of treachery and turned upon him !"—(Verity). **Bark**—thereby showing their eagerness to chase the game.

69. **Lym**—short of lymmer, a species of blood-hound, so called from the leam or leather thong, by which he was led.

70. **Bobtail like**—a rough-haired dog with its tail cut short *N.B.* 'tike' is common in Yorkshire, as a term of reproach. **Trundle-tail**—or trindle-tail, a dog with a curly long drooping tail, which he seems to trundle along after him. *Cf.* Heywood, "A Woman Killed with Kindness" : "Ay, and your dogs are trundle-tails and curs."

72. **For.........my head**—Presumably it means that Edgar jerks his head at the imaginary doges. Muir offers his two suggestions : (i) Edgar throws his horn at them, as 'head'

means the antlers of a deer ; it could be stretched to mean the ox's horn of poor Tom ; and (ii) Edgar might puts his horn on his head and pretend he is an ox attacking the dogs with it.

73. **Leap'd the hatch**—leap over the half-door, *i.e.*, make a hurried exit. 'The hatch' is the lower half of a divided door such as still to be seen in many country cottages.

74. **Sessa**—see note under III. iv. 97. **Wakes**—originally it means festivities, held on the anniversary of the dedication of a church, then the meaning extended to all the general festivals especially those of the countryside. *Cf.* "Winter's Tale", IV. iii. 109 :

"He haunts, wakes, fairs and bear-baitings." Steevens suggests : this line is from song in which vagabond calls upon a companion to accompany him on his rounds.

75. **Thy horn is dry**—Aubrey in "Natural History of Wiltshire" thus comments : "Bedlam beggars wore about their necks a great horn of an ox in a string or bawdrie, which when they came to an house for almes, they did wind and they did put the drink given them into this horne whereto they did put a stopple."

This formula was used in begging a drink. "Dry is used in the sense of empty, implying that Edgar was quite reluctant in playing the assumed part any longer.

76. **Anatomize**—dissect.

77-77. **What breeds**—what growth there can be.

78. **Entertain**—engage ; take into my service.

79. **Hundred**—*i.e.*, hundred knights.

80. **Persian**—magnificent costume.

N.B. Reminiscent of the Persian embassy that visited England early in the reign of James I, may be a general allusion to the proverbial splendour of Eastern attire.

84. **Curtains**—Lear imagines himself in his own bed. **Supper i' th' morning**—since we have no supper to-night. Gloucester was to provide food, but Lear, above all, needed rest.

85. **And......noon**—Blunden suggests that there are seven meanings to this sentence :

(i) They are a sort of tired ironical joke on Lear's late hourse ;

(ii) They make a playful complaint that the Fool would like a little food before going to bed ;

(iii) There is a pun on the people's name for the scarlet pimpernal. The weak-bodied Fool with his coxcomb looks like that flower ;

(iv) But, if so, he shuts late. Surely there has been storm enough during the night ;

(v) There will be worse storm still, and at once ;

(vi) It is the last time that the Fool speaks during the play. He presages his ultimate death, with a secondary meaning in the word 'bed' of grave ; and

(vii) He takes off his coxcomb for the last time to please his old friends, the audience.

90. **Upon**—against.

92. **Drive**—in former days the litters were drawn by men as well as horses.

94. **Dally**—waste time ; hesitate ; delay. *Cf.* 'Dilly-dally—waste time by not making up one's mind.

96. **Stand......loss**—are certain to be lost.

97-98. **That......conduct**—who will lead you speedily and conduct you safely to the place, where you can make further arrangement for your journey.

99. **Broken sinews**—overstrained, or shattered or racked nerves.

100-101. **Which............hard cure**—which (*i.e.*, the overstrained nerves) have little chance of regaining their tone, if the exigency of the time cannot allow him the badly needed rest. **Stand in hard cure**—"are in an extremely precarious condition or a nearly desperate state"—(Craig).

103-116. **When we..............lurk, lurk**—Quarto gives this passage, whereas the Folio omits it. Delius defends its genuineness : "We readily admit that the style is not that of the drama ; but this difference may be explained in two ways, partly by the form and partly by the matter. Shakespeare is fond of introducing such rhyming lines, formed of a number of pointed epigrammatic antithetic sentences. They stand out from the

surrounding blank verse, and point the moral of the preceding situation, and the actions of the various characters. The second explanation is, that the poet lays great stress on the parallelism existing between Lear and Gloucester and takes opportunity of impressing it again upon his audience. A mere interpolator would hardly have known of this peculiar tendency of the poet, or have carried it out so thoroughly and in so pregnant a manner, as in the few but thoroughly Shakespearian words : 'He childed as I father'd."

103.—**Woes**—calamities like our own.

105. **Who alone suffers**—*i.e.*, without anybody to share his sufferings.

106. **Leaving.........behind**—oblivious of many situations, in which his mind was care-free and he enjoyed the happy scenes of life.

107. **Much.........o'erskip**—*i.e.*, the mind lightly passes over the more severe sufferings.

109. **Portable**—supportable ; endurable. *Cf.* Macbeth, IV. iii. 89 : "All these are portable, with other graces weigh'd."

110. **Bend.........bow**—The person who bows suffers more than the person, who merely bends.

111. **He.........father'd**—He had cruel daughters and I have a cruel father.

112-113. **Make the.........defile thee**—"Attend to the great events that are approaching and make thyself known when that false opinion now prevailing against thee shall, in consequence of just proof of thy integrity, revoke its erroneous sentence and recall thee to honour and reconciliations."—Johnson. **High noises**—the signs of discord among the great and the political unrest. **Who......defile thee**—whose gross misrepresentation stains your name.

113. **Reconciles thee**—*i.e.*, to your father.

115. **What......king**—whatever else may happen to me, may the King effect his escape without the least harm.

116. **Lurk, Lurk**—I must, meanwhile, hide myself.

ACT III : SCENE VII

Analysis. The scene takes us to a room in Gloucester's castle, where Goneril is sent to her husband, so as to apprise him of the landing of the French army. Gloucester is announced a traitor

and a search is made to capture him. Regan wants him to be hanged, the moment he is discovered ; but Goneril adds, "Pluck out his eyes." Edmund is advised by Cornwall to accompany Goneril, as the scene of blinding his traitorous father would not be fit for his beholding. Oswald enters and announces that the King has been sent by Gloucester towards Dover. Gloucester is caught and brought in and pinioned to a chair. Regan plucks, in a fiendish mockery, the white beard of the old man. Gloucester is asked about the letters he had lately received from France, at which he replies they were from "a neutral heart", and that his kindness compelled him to send the King to Dover. His replies rouse the wrath of Cornwall and Regan, who, both, get his eyes plucked out. One of the servants is agitated and strikes at Cornwall, who would not check himself. Regan stabs the servant from behind. The servant dies but not before Cornwall himself is mortally wounded. Gloucester is left "to smell his way to Dover", and soon after Cornwall dies.

In this scene, the main plot having reached its climax is dropped and the underplot in its turn is brought to a crisis by the blinding of Gloucester. That the forces of retribution are at hand, is shown by the death of Cornwall, who falls by the hand of his own servant.

It is something noteworthy that the King is being driven unaware to his daughter, whom he has rejected. Similarly Gloucester is placed, unknowingly, in the charge of the son, whom he had banished.

The critics have raised a "chorus of condemnation" upon the blinding of Gloucester particularly to its stage ability. Three eminent critics are quoted as under—

(i) "An act too horrid to be endured in dramatic exhibition." —(Johnson.)

(ii) "In this one point the tragic in this play has been urged beyond the outermost mark and 'ne plus ultra' of the dramatic." —(Coleridge.)

(iii) "Shakespeare does put too much on his stage, and sometimes violates the modesty of art. To his audience he must have seemed notable for restraint, they were inured to horrors ; and he gave them no hangings, and no slow deaths by

torture. But the blinding of Gloucester on the stage can not be excused. This is the chief of his offences......"

—(Sir Walter Raleigh.)

It may, however, be remembered that such acts of mutilation were by no means rare on the Elizabethan stage. As a matter of fact, after the tragic heights of the preceding scenes, it would have been rather impossible, by any second hand description of Gloucester's sufferings, to move the audience to pity and indignation against his torture. A critic has aptly said : "The poet daringly and successfully availed himself of the opportunity to cast the last disgrace upon filial ingratitude by exposing its surpassing hatefulness in comparison with the direst crime, acted under our eyes with every detail of horror."

Notes

4. **Hang him instantly**—"Regan is ever quick to suggest something evil. The whole of her bearing in this scene is very characteristic of her essentially cruel nature."—(Verity.)

6. **To my displeasure**—as my wrath shall prompt me to.

7. **Bound to**—prepared to ; ready ; purposing to.

10. **Festinate**—hasty ; speedy. **Bound to the like**—ready to make speedy preparation for battle.

10-11. **Our posts......us**—Our speedy messengers on horse-back, between us, shall carry all necessary information in regard to events. **Intelligent**—*i.e.*, carrying intelligence or information.

14. **Convey'd him hence**—sent him away secretly.

16. **Questrists**—searchers.—*N.B.* Elsewhere not used by Shakespeare.

17. **Lord's dependents**—*N.B.* This is Pope's emendation, the Quarto as well as Folio has 'lords'. In case the reading 'lords dependents' is followed, it would mean, 'the lords dependent directly on Lear'.

22. **Pinion him**—tie hands at the back as the pinions (joints of wings, most remote from the bird) of a bird are secured to prevent its flying.

23-24. **Pass........justice**—pass the death sentence on him, without the justifiable formality of a trial.

24-25. **Yet........wrath**—My power shall submit to my

wrath ; my wrath may be limited and may not strictly authorize me to punish him (*i.e.*, Gloucester) out of hand, but I will let my anger overbear considerations of legal technicality. **Do a court'sy**—yield ; give way ; gratify : "bend to our wrath as a courtesy is made by bending the body."—Steevens.

28. **Corky**—sapless ; dry and withered like the bark of the cork tree.

32. **Filthy**—odious ; disgraceful.

37. **Naughty**—cruel, wicked, nefarious.

40. **My hospitable favours**—The features of one who has been so much hospitable to you ; or the features of one who is your host. **Favours**—features.

41. **Ruffle**—treat with such violence.

42. **Late**—lately.

43. **Be simple-answer'd**—give a straightforward answer, without resorting to subterfuges.

44. **Confederacy**—conspiracy ; Shakespeare generally uses this word in a bad sense.

45. **Footed**—set foot ; landed.

46. **The lunatic King**—It rouses us to ask, how does, after all, Regan come to know about the insanity of the King ?

47. **Guessingly set down**—written without definite knowledge, the contents of which being merely conjectural.

54. **I am tied.........course**—I am tied to the stake like a baited bear and must endure the attack made upon me, by the relay of dogs.

N.B. The metaphor is from the popular sport of bear-baiting, which 'course' is like a 'round' in a boxing match, a technical term for the struggle between the bear and each set of dogs.

Cf. "Macbeth", V. vii. 1 :

> "They have tied me to a shake ; I cannot fly,
> But bear-like, I must fight the course."

Cf. Brome, the Antipodes", III. 195 :

"You shall see two ten-dog courses at the great bear", *i.e.*, two attacks, each to be made by ten dogs.

57. **Pluck......eyes**—It is an example of dramatic irony. Gloucester unconsciously mentions the very torture, which is shortly to be inflicted upon him. Goneril has proposed this very treatment for Gloucester (line 5), and the audience knows what is going to happen.

58. **Anointed flesh**—*i.e.*, the flesh of the anointed King; 'anointed' means consecrated with the holy oil. **Rash**—"Strike obliquely with the tusk as a bear does." The Folio reading 'stick' is probably, as Muir suggests, an actor's substitution or a sophistication; but it may be a substitute on Shakespeare's part to avoid the thrice repeated '*sh*', (flesh, rash, boarish).

60. **Hell-black**—Capell suggests that Shakespeare derived this epithet from Hakluyt, viii. 304:

> "To guide the ship in the hell-darke night,
> When we could not see any shore."

60. **Buoy'd up**—risen very high; *cf.*

> "The sea would have lifted up the fixed fires and extinguished them."—(Schmidt.)

61. **Stelled fires**—It has two meanings: (i) stellar *i.e.*, starry; and (ii) fixed, or made firm.

Cf. "Lucrece", 1444: "To find a face where all distress is stell'd," and also Sonnet, XXIV: "Mine eye hath play'd the painter and hath stell'd."

The word, from Middle English, 'stellen' means fixed. But there is no reason, as Muir argues, why Shakespeare should not have had the secondary meaning of starry in the mind: indeed it is impossible to believe he did not. 'Fixed stars' are stars as opposed to 'wandering stars' (planets).

62. **Holp**—helped. **He holp...........rain**—"The meaning seems to be, "he encouraged the heavens to rain (the Quarto 'rage'), more fiercely upon him!'—(Moberly.)

63. **Dearn**—So reads the Quarto; the Folio has sterne; 'dearn'—dreary; dreadful; dire; it is more expressive than 'sterne'. *Cf.* W. Leigh "Drumme Devot" (1613):

> "The light of Israel was put out for a time:
> Queen Elizabeth died, a dearne day to England."

64. **Turn thy key**—unlock the door.

65. **All cruels else subscribe**—"Yielded, submitted to the necessity of the occasion."—(Johson). "That is, submitted their cruelty to the compassion they felt at the sight of his wretchedness." (Heath). All other cruel acts of the wolves being condoned. *N.B.* The Quarto has 'subscrib'd', the Folio 'subscribe'. In both these cases this meaning may apply. In that night, which was so terrible and turbulent, you would have opened the door even to wolves, given admittance to every cruel thing except the storm. **Subscribe**—yielded admittance to.

Schmidt thus interprets : "Every thing which is at other times cruel, shows feeling or regard ; you alone have not done so."

"All other creatures, except you (Regan) yielded, gave up for a time their cruel habits, their fierceness." (R. H. Case).

Cf. "Troilus and Cressida", IV. v. 105-6 :

"Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes to tender objects" (*i.e.*, gives up his wrath at the sight of objects of compassion).

Gloucester implies that Regan, as well as her sister, has been more cruel to her father than she would have been to the wolves.

66. **Winged vengeance**—divine vengeance like a bird of prey ; swift vengeance of the divine powers.

67. **See't**—Cornwall's emphasis is on 'see' ; he says in effect: "O, you will see ! I shall see to it that though vengeance should overtake me, you do not see it, though you may hear of it."

68. **Upon.........foot**—On the blinding of Gloucester several opinions of the critics have been discussed in the analysis of this scene. Besides, the remarks of Capell, Ulrici, and Heraud, being of considerable significance are given here :

(i) "The barbarity exercised upon Gloucester is indeed a part of the story that was the source of this episode, for that Paphlagonian king's eyes were put out by a son ; but the putting out of poor Gloucester's seems to be more immediately copy'd from 'Selimus'."—(Capell).

(ii) "To have the scene where Cornwall puts out Gloucester's eyes represented directly on stage, can only arouse a feeling of disgust, which has nothing in common with the idea of beauty, nor with that of grandeur, power, or sublimity,

and which, consequently, can only impair the effect of the tragedy."—(Ulrici).

(iii) "In this scene of Pity and Terror the especial elements of the Tragic are urged to their utmost limits. Of course, there was danger of excess. But Shakespeare was on his guard...... By inserting in the group a servant who did recognize its intrinsic horror and compassionated the sufferer, he converted disgust into pity. The other servants also compassionate the blind man and lead him out to help him to heal his wounds and to place him in safe custody. The entire current of feeling is turned in the direction of pity by the force of sympathy. Thus the horror in the 'horrid act' is mitigated and reduced to the level of terror."—(Heraud : "Inner Life of Shakespeare", p. 304).

69. **He that...........old**—He who desires to live : "He who desires to imagine ; not merely he who thinks."—(Deighton).

71. **One.........old**—In case I leave one of your eyes in its socket, one side of the face (*i.e.*, the side which has an eye) will jeer the other for being without an eye, and hence let the other also be plucked out.

76. **Did wear a beard**—like Gloucester.

78. **Villain**—bondman ; serf.

79-80. **Take the chance of anger**—run the risk of dying at the hands of one roused so justly to wrath.

Nature—natural feeling.

87-88. **Enkindle... ....act**—*N.B.* the tragic irony in these lines. **Quit**—requite : repay ; retaliate.

90. **Made the overture**—disclosed or revealed your treasons.

92. **Abus'd**—unjustly treated by me ; deceived ; wronged.

94-95. **Go.........Dover**—The old man's agony, mental as well as physical, reaching its extreme limit, the only thing left was to push him out of his own castle. The fiendish mockery is characteristic of her (Regan's) nature. **How look you ?**—What makes you look in that strange way ? Cornwall's eyes, mortally wounded as he was, reveal an unbearable agony.

98. **Apace**—profusely ; fast.

99. **Untimely.........hurt**—this wound comes but at an inopportune time.

101-108. **If she live.........heaven help him**—Quarto gives these lines, while the Folio omits them : presumably for acting purposes, the scene ends with the departure of Cornwall. But the addition seems to be quite in keeping with Shakespeare's practice. It serves two specific purposes :

(i) The lines furnish a practical comment on the wickedness and barbarity of Cornwall and Regan and on the speedy punishment of crime : and

(ii) They provide a relaxation to the emotionally overstrained spectators by showing what will happen to the Bedlam beggar, Edgar, and that Gloucester's trial is over and he is going into safe hands.

102. **The old......death**—the natural death, *i.e.*, when a person attains his old age, after that ; customary ; ordained by nature.

103. **Women.........monsters**—Because they will not at all be apprehensive of the divine vengeance and thus be licentious in committing crimes.

104. **Bedlam**—*i.e.*, Bedlam beggar, Edgar.

105. **Where he would**—wherever he may desire to move. **Roguish madness**—that prompts him to saunter whimsically.

N.B. It is quite strange that servant speaks, as if the Bedlam were a well-known character in that vicinity, although it was only the previous evening since when Edgar wore the mask of madness.

106. **Allows itself to anything**—will adapt itself to any course laid down for him.

107. **Flax...........eggs**—An old time remedy for the bleeding wounds and for all hurts in the eye.

ACT IV : SCENE I

Analysis. Edgar, standing on the heath gives vent to his reflections and finds it better to be thus openly despised rather than becoming a victim to the sycophants, who with their double-edged weapon of wheedling, outwardly praise, nonetheless inwardly despise. From the level of the worst, there is still hope to ameliorate our wretched plight, "The worst returns to laughter." Gloucester enters "poorly led" by an old man. This very sight torments the heart of Edgar who finds it a great

ordeal to dissemble any longer, yet he has to resort to this cumbersome 'process', inevitable as it is. Gloucester realizes the blunder that he committed, "I stumbled when I saw." Our prosperity makes us secure, while our deficiencies, alerting us against our rashness and consequent troubles, prove our positive advantages. Gloucester then reminds himself of his son (not in the least aware that he stands by his side), whom he treated unjustly. Strange are the ways of gods, with whom resides the destiny of men :

> "As flies to wanton boys, are we to th' gods ;
> They kill us for their sport."

Gloucester wants the old man to leave him for a while as now he would entreat the Bedlam beggar Tom to guide him on his way to Dover, where the latter should be good enough to overtake them. The old man agrees to give his best apparel to Edgar, whatever may befall him. Gloucester gives his purse to Edgar and wants him to lead himself to the tall cliff at Dover, which from this allusion has long been known as "Shakespeare's cliff".

This scene continues further the action of the underplot from the point where it was left at the end of Act III. The servants have apparently confided Gloucester to one of his occupants of the farm-house, instead of bringing him to Edgar, the supposed Bedlam beggar. Edgar undertakes to guide Gloucester to Dover and this assistance to his father is necessary with a view to maintaining the parallelism between the mainplot and the underplot.

Notes

1-2. **Yet......flatter'd**—Though I am in a pitiable plight, it is better to be thus despised as an outcast, with a consciousness thereof, rather than deluded by the double-edged coaxing of those who outwardly praise, nonetheless despise me inwardly. "The meanings seem to be thus : 'Yet it is better to be thus in this fixed and acknowledged contemptible state than living in affluence to be flattered and despised at the same time."—(Sir Joshua Reynolds). **Thus .... contemn'd**—'Known to be contemned' means here conscious of and familiar with contempt."—(Schmidt). Johnson interprets thus : " Tis better to be thus, contemned and known to yourself to be contemned."

2-4. **To be worst...........in fear**—When the fate has done its worst for us and when we have been brought to the very

bottom of fortune's wheel, there is still some hope, whereas nothing makes us apprehensive of further fall.

3. **Most dejected thing of fortune**—a thing most abased, or rendered lowly by the vagaries of fortune. *N.B.* 'dejected' used in etymological sense. Latin *'de'*-down ; *jacere*, throw ; does not however mean 'cast down in spirits'.

4. **Stands still in esperance**—is always in a condition of hope ; is ever in a state of hope.

5-6. **The lamentable .....laughter**—The lamentable change is one which makes us descend from the height of happiness but after we have reached the worst, any change for that reason provides us relief as well as happiness, and hence inevitably proves to be better.

9. **Owes.........blasts**—Not being, in any way, indebted to you and consequently has no reason to be afraid of you. "They have done their worst upon him, and so absolved him from all obligations of gratitude."—(Hudson)

> "When a man's debts are paid, he
> fears no creditors."—(Kittredge.)

10. **Poorly led**—R. Flatter points out that—'ly' represents "like' (*Cf.* Abbott. § 447) and that 'poorly led' means led like a poor man, *i.e.* like a wretched beggar.

10-12. **Word......age**—If it were not that your vicissitudes make us hateful to you, O world, we would not easily and submissively reconcile the old age and to the consequent approach of death. Malone thus explains it—"O world ! if reverses of fortune and changes such as I now see and feel, from ease and affluence to poverty and misery, did not show us the little value of life, we should never submit with any kind of resignation to the weight of years and its necessary consequences, infirmity and death.

Montaigne has a similar thought (tr. Florio, i. 105) "Consider we by the ordinary mutation and daily declinations which we suffer, how Nature deprives us of the sight of our losse and impairing : what hath an aged man left him of his youths vigour, and of his forepast life."

12. **Yield**—submit ; endure ; reconcile.

13. **Your father's tenant**—presumably, the occupant of the farm-house in which Gloucester placed Lear for shelter."—

(Cowden Clarke). This implies that the servants who propose to get the Bedlam beggar to lead the old Earl, not finding the supposed poor Tom, have left the helpless blind nobleman in charge of this tenant.

16. **Thy comfort**—your ceaseless endeavours to help me; the service, that you are rendering me.

17. **They may hurt**—may be injurious to you, when the Duke takes a note of it.

19. **I stumbled when I saw**—While I had eyes, walked blindly into trouble; when in possession of the eyesight, I was grossly erroneous in my discernment; when the outer eyes could see, the inner eyes did not and I acted like a simpleton. *N.B.* Heilman in his comments considers this to be "one of the central paradoxes of the play."

19-21. **Full oft......commodities**—It is a thing of common experience that the resources or advantages we enjoy, make us careless (consequently creating griefs and anxieties for us), whereas our deficiencies and absolute wants (keeping us alert against rashness and consequent troubles) prove positive advantages to us. **Our means secure us**—Moberly suggests that 'secure us' means 'make us over-secure', as we have "a secure fool', not jealous nor secure. The antithesis then becomes, while we are made careless by the advantages on which we reckoned, we are saved by something which seemed a weak point'. This presumably alludes to the fable of the stage jeopardized by the horns which he extravagantly admired, and saved by the legs, utterly despised by him.

'Secure', used in the Latin sense, 'securus'='sine cura', *i.e.*, without care Staunton cites Sir Thomas Moore, Life of Edward V : "When this lord was most afraid he was most secure and when he was secure, danger was over his head". **Commodities**—benefits; advantages. *Cf.* 2 Henry IV, I. ii. 278 : "I will turn diseases to commodity."

22. **The food......wrath**—*i.e.*, on which his anger nourished itself; object of his anger. **Abused**—misled; deluded, deceived. Shakespeare frequently uses it in this sense.

23. **See........touch**—know you by the touch, now that I have no eyes to have a look at you.

25-26. **O gods... ...I was**—Edgar refers to the words

which he himself uttered in the beginning of this scene (*line* 2) *Cf.* lines 27-28.

27-28. **The worst is............the worst**—So long as we can comfort ourselves with the idea of the worst that could have happened, we are not without hope and hence not in reality at the worst. *N.B.* This sentence is paradoxically meaningful : to be at the worst, and still not at the worst. I think this method may serve a man to search out a golden mean in between the arrogant and shallow optimism, and pessimism, making a man utterly gloomy and defeatist. Thus it provides a practical clue how one may become a person of balanced intellect, *Sthitaprajna*,' as enunciated in "*Shriman Bhagvad Gita*."

31. **He has some reason**—not altogether devoid of reason or intelligence ; therefore not wholly mad.

33. **A man worm**—a man in terms of a worm. *Cf.* "Job, XXV. 6 : "How much less man, that is a worm and the son of man which is a worm ?" 'No better than the worm beneath the foot.'—(Deighton.)

33-34. **My son ...... mind**—*Cf.* III. iv. 159-160.

35. **Friends**—friendly. Henley remarks adequately : "This grammatical impropriety is still so prevalent as that the omission of the anomalous 's' would give some uncouthness to the sound of an otherwise familiar expression...........'I am friends with you' is equally the phrase in addressing a single person." *Cf.* "Troilus and Cressida", IV. iv. 71 :

"And I'll grow friend with danger."

36-37. **As flies .....sport**—"I very much doubt whether Shakespeare would have allowed any but a Heathen character to utter this sentiment."—(Wordsworth.)

Empson remarks that "Gloucester does not say it in passing, but as a summing-up of what Lear has repeatedly implied ;" but as Chambers points out :

"The gods are giving Gloucester his wish and, if he can but be saved from despair, he will live to know it. Shakespeare's irony runs deep."

N.B. Edgar propounds altogether a different view. *Cf.* V. iii. 170-173.

37. **How should this be ?**—How is it that he has lost his eyes and no longer takes me to be an ingrate villain? Moberly thinks that Edgar is questioning the truth of his father's last pessimistic reflection.

38-39. **Bad.........others**—It is a pitiable occupation that I have to play the part of a fool (*viz.*, of Bedlam beggar, poor Tom) to conceal my griefs, knowing it that it is distressing to me as well as to others.

"It is most unseemly that I should be compelled to act the part of a mad man in the face of my father's overwhelming grief."—(Amour.)

39. **Ang'ring**—causing pain to ; distressing. "He at the same time displeases himself and the person he endeavours to amuse."—(Heath.)

41. **Get thee away**—You may leave me for some time now, as I have secured a guide for me.

43. **Do............love**—do it out of love and good-will, that you have been cherishing for me all these years.

46. **'Tis the times' plague**—The times are accursed and hence it is nothing strange that I, a blind man, should be led by him, a lunatic. *N.B.* "Gloucester uses his own situation as a symbol : when the rulers are mad and the people blind" —(Muir.)

47. **Do as.........pleasure**—Either do it, as I ask you to, or whatever your desire prompts you to.

N.B. Gloucester suddenly recalls, after he is no more in that status to issue commands.

49. **'Parel**—apparel. *Cf.* Marlowe "The Jew of Malta", IV. iv. (1830-1831)" Here's goodly 'parrell, is there not ?

—(Cited by Muir)

50. **Come on't what will**—Whatever may befall me ; without caring for what happens to me.

51. **Daub it further**—dissemble any more ; to put on a false show ; 'daub' implies doing any thing coarsely and clumsily. The figure is taken from plastering mortar. *Cf.* "Richard III", III. v. 29 :

"So smooth he daub'd his vice with show of virtue."

53. **I must**—*i.e.*, daub it further, as it has become inevitable for me.

55. **House-way**—bridle-path. *Cf.* T. Heywood," A Maydenhead Well Lost." : "I have one for the horse-way, another for the foot-way and a third for the turning-stile."

58. **Obidicut**—In Harsnet's "Declaration", we have 'Hoberdicut.'

59. **Hobbididence**—the form, found in Harsnet ; Capell reads, 'Hoberdidance'.

60-61. **Of mopping and mowing**—making grimaces and mouths at. *Cf.* "Tempest", IV. i. 47 :

"Each one, tripping on his toe
Will be here with mop and maw."

Huloet "Dictionary," 1572, defines—'mow' or to make a mow. "It seemeth a word derived of the thing, for, we can not pronounce the word 'mow', but we almost make a mow."

Malone quotes from Harsnet's "Declaration" : 'Make antlike faces, grinne, mow and mop like an ape.' Capell : "drop, duck or dance oddly."

61-62. **Who since......women**—It is generally supposed to have been suggested by Harsnet's "Declaration" : in which the three chamber-maids are spoken of as being charmed by the fiend. Moberly regards it as "a general reference to chamber-maids who perform these antics before their mistress' drawing-glass." *Cf.* III. ii. 35-36 :

"For there was never yet fair woman but she made mouths in a glass."

64. **Have.........strokes**—have made you to submissively resign to all the bitterest blows of adversity.

64-65. **That I..............happier**—Let my calamities teach you to mitigate the sufferings of others, so as to make them happier ; *i.e.*, because my wretchedness now teaches me to compassionate those who are in distress.—(Wordsworth.)

65. **Heavens, deal so still**—May Heavens ever grant it to me to think of others' woes and calamities.

66. **Superfluous**—One, who has more than what he needs; pampered ; blest to excess with the good things of life. **Lust-dieted**—feeding gluttonously ; a man dieted by lust ; a voluptuary, a man pampered by wealth and surfeited by over-indulgence.

N.B. Gloucester may be reflecting on his own adultery.

67. **That...... ...ordinance**—Heath in his "A Revisal of Shakespeare's Text" (1765), explains it thus :

"Who instead of paying the deference and submission due to your ordinance, treats it as his slave, by making it subservient to his views of pleasure and interest, and trampling on and spurning it whenever it ceases to be of service to him in either of those respects."

"Who treats your divine dispensation with arrogant disdain."—(Deighton). **Slaves**—enslaves ; in this sense the word has been used in several Elizabethan plays. **Ordinance**—the laws of Heaven.

67-68. **That............feel**—who deliberately closes his eyes to the miseries of people around him for the reason he himself has not experienced them ; 'feel'—"feel others' sorrow in his own person."

68. **Feel your power quickly**—Let your punishment overtake them quickly for their callousness.

69-70. **So............enough**—then the excess riches of a few will be distributed among the impoverished many, so that each man comes to sufficiency.

72. **Cliff**—the cliff is known as "Shakespeare's cliff" ; this, as Moberly suggests, is "one of the many instances of Shakespeare's homage to Sir Philip Sidney." Muir conjectures that Gloucester wants to leap off, partly because the exigencies of the plot demand that he should meet Lear, who has gone to Dover. **Bending head**—beetling brow, "frowning brow ; brow overhanging its base."

73. **Looks............deep**—overhang threateningly into the sea, whose encrochments are resisted by it.

"Restrained back, *i.e.*, (the deep) to which it acts as an effectual barrier."—(Craig.)

Cf. "2 Henry IV", I. i. 154 : Let not nature's hand keep the wild flood confined."

75-76. **And I'll.........me**—and I will redress your grievance by something valuable I have upon my person, and ameliorate your status.

ACT IV : SCENE II

Analysis. Edmund and Goneril meet outside the palace of Albany, who is inside and does not come to welcome them. Oswald apprises them of an extraordinary change the attitude of Albany has undergone, so much so that he would take even the most alarming news of the landing of the French armed forces, laughingly. Gloucester's treachery and Edmund's allegiance in exposing the former as a traitor make him furious and call Oswald a "sot". Edmund is told to go no further, but is assured of Goneril's love. After Edmund's departure, Goneril proceeds to the palace apprehensively and finds Albany conscious of the villainy of the "tiger sisters". He showers imprecations on Goneril whom, if it were proper for him, he would instantly rend into pieces.

> "...........howe'er thou art a fiend,
> A woman's shape doth shield thee."

At this moment a messenger enters and announces the death of Cornwall and the blinding of Gloucester as well as the treason of Edmund. Albany is very much shocked to hear all this. Goneril finds the news pretty good but has an apprehension lest her sister, now being a widow should grab up as her husband, her beloved Edmund and thereby make her own life repugnant to her. Albany wants the messenger to describe in greater details, the sordid events that have recently taken place, and he declares to live to revenge the eyes of Gloucester.

This scene takes us back to the main plot ; Edmund's replacing Gloucester obviously becomes the connecting link between the two actions Edmund and Goneril are shown just at the completion of their journey, which they commenced in III. vii. Apparently they have been making love in the way, exchanging wishes and we find Goneril has developed a violent adulterous passion in her for Edmund, at the same time despising her husband, "Milk-liver'd man", as she calls him. This new interest in the action suggests how the catastrophe is to be brought about : the iniquitous are about to become the instruments of their own punishment.

The scene also throws new light on the character of Albany, who shows an unexpected firmness and derermines to be an avenger of Gloucester's terrible affliction. Goneril ambitiously ponders over how Cornwall's death may affect her projects.

Notes

1. **Welcome**—*i.e.*, to my abode ; "She welcomes him to her house after she is reached it in his company." —(Delius). **Mild**—a sneering sarcasm, referring to her remonstrances in I, iv, 320-2 and 338.

"It must be remembered that Albany, the husband of Goneril, disliked, at the end of the first Act, the scheme of oppression and ingratitude."—(Johnson).

2. **On the way**—from Gloucester's castle, whence they commenced their journey, and now have arrived at the palace of Albany.

3. **Chang'd**—changed his attitude, brought about by the cruel treatment of Lear by his ingrate daughters.

7. **The loyal..............son**—refers to Edmund's allegiance by proving his father a traitor.

8. **Sot**—blockhead ; fool ; literally one stupefied by drinking, a habitual drunkard which meaning Shakespeare does not imply here. It is used here in its French sense, 'sot'='stupid'.

9. **I had......out**—My view of things was topsy-turvy, *i.e.*, taking loyalty for treason and treason for loyalty, since, as he thought, neither Gloucester was a traitor, nor Edmund loyal.

11. **What like, offence**—What he ought to have liked most, would be but offensive to him. **Then......further**—Then seeing that my husband is not in good temper, shall you hesitate to come in lest there should be any quarrel between him and you?

12. **Cowish**—cowardly. It is a rare use in this sense. Cotgrave's "French Dictionary", '*Coiiard*'—a coward, a dastard a cow. *Cf.* R. Edwards, "Demon and Pithias", (1571) : "That Carisophus my master was no man but a cow."

13. **Undertake**—be enterprising ; act spiritedly or courageously ; assume responsibility.

13-14. **He'll not...........answer**—He by his very nature will shrink from any wrongs or insults, which no honourable man will passively endure. "He is sure to ignore wrongs or insults which, if he noticed, he would be obliged to resent."

—(Craig.)

14-15. **Our wishes..............effects**—The wishes that we exchanged during the course of our journey ; *viz*., my husband may be got rid of and you should take his place, may long before be realized.

"What we wish, before our march is at an end, may be brought to happen, *i.e.*, the murder or despatch of her husband."—(Steevens).

15. **May prove effects**—may be fulfilled. **Brother**—brother-in-law, Cornwall.

16. **Hasten his musters**—hurry up and complete the enrolment of troops. **Powers**—forces.

17. **I.........arms**—I must take the sword out of my weak husband's hands, resigning to him the distaff. **Change**—exchange. **Arms**—the insignia of our sexes, the sword and the distaff. 'Distaff'—spinning ; which is emblematical of women's occupation.

19. **Shall...........us**—shall act as an agent, a go-between. **Like**—likely.

20-21. **If you.........command**—If you are spirited so as to undertake the hazardous enterprise of executing your mistress's command, ensuring your own good fortune.

N.B. "Goneril is quibbling on the word 'mistress'. She's presumably going to ask Edmund to murder Albany.—(Mu

Stage Direction : **A favour**—some ornament such as a jewel, a ring or a ribbon or a glove, as a token of love.

22. **Decline your head**—lower your head a little ; may be for a kiss, and less probably for putting a chain round his neck.

N.B. Steevens thinks that Goneril bids Edmund decline his head that she might, while giving him a kiss, appear to Oswald merely to be whispering to him. But this, Wright says, is giving Goneril, "credit for too much delicacy, as Oswald was a 'serviceable villain'."

23. **Thy**—It is to be noticed how the formal 'your' gives place to endearing 'thy', see Abbott. § 6235. **Would.....air**— Heilman suggests that this as well as the following lines contain "several kinds of sexual innuendo."

24. **Conceive**—understand well what all this kiss implies

25. **Yours.........death**—shall be ready to sacrifice even my life for you when the need comes ; I shall fall fighting for you. *N.B.* Edmund implies why need she at all be sceptical about his loyalty to her in getting rid of her husband ? Obviously Edmund's allegiance remains not without its concomitant unscrupulousness.

28. **My.........body**—A simpleton like him, who calls himself my master, has no claim on my duties as his wife. *N.B.* The Quartos read : 'My foote usurps my head' ; 'My foole usurps my bed.'

29. **I have......whistle**—There was a time when you held me high in your esteem and considered me worthy of a warmer welcome than what you give me at the moment. *N.B.* Johnson interpreting it a little strangely, finds here an allusion to Edmund's love : "though you disregard me thus, I have found one who thinks me worth calling." *Cf.* The proverb, "It is a poore dog that is not worth the whistling."

Bransom, in the "Tragedy of King Lear," p. 140, observes: "Once, when he was in love with her he would have come on the road to meet her.

31. **Fear**......have misgivings and fears, concerning......

32-33. **That itself..............itself**—A nature like yours, which is disdainful of its parentage, cannot be kept within fixed bounds; but will recklessly break into the widest excesses, (prompted by animal impulses).

"That nature which is arrived to such a pitch of unnatural degeneracy, as to contemn its origin, cannot from thenceforth be restrained within any certain bounds whatever, but is prepared to break out into the most monstrous excesses every way as occasion or temptation may offer."—(Heath.)

33. **Cannot...........itself**—cannot be securely bounded or restrained within itself. "**Certain**"—fixed ; firm.

34-36. **She that.........use**—She, who thus violently tears herself of from her parent stem will finally go to hell-fire. "The branch that is ready to sever itself from trunk from which it drew the matter of its own sustenance, must necessarily wither and rot away."—(Deighton). *Cf.* "Hebrews" vi. 8. "But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh into cursing ; whose end is to be burned."

34. **Silver**—tear off, as a branch. *N.B.* Warburton here refers to the 'use' that witches and enchanters are said to make of 'wither'd branches' in their charms ; but though we have in "Macbeth", IV. i. 27-8 : " Slips of yew silver'd in the moon's eclipse", the idea here remains merely plausible. **Disbranch**—cut off ; sever.

35. **Material sap**—the sap that nourishes, and makes a thing substantial. **Perforce.........wither**—*Cf.* "Leir," 1242-3.

> "If so the stocke be dryed with disdayne,
> Withered and sere the branch must needs remaine."

36. **Come.........use**—be used as faggots for burning.

37. **No.........foolish**—I am simply fed up of your sermons, the purport of which is trash and hence no more of that. 'Text'—passage from the scripture.

39. **Filths.........themselves**—All things taste filthy to those who are themselves filthy. **Savour**—feel relish for.

42. **Reverence**—countenance worthy of reverence. **Head-lugg'd**—tugged by the head ; led by the head or ears, as by the itinerant showman, who carries his dancing bears, infuriated by being dragged by the head, *Cf.* "I Henry IV", I. i. 13 :

> "I am as melancholy as a big cat or a lugged bear".

43. **Madded**—maddened ; driven mad. *N.B.* But how did Albany knew of Lear's insanity?

44. **Could**—is it possible that ?

46. **Their visible spirits**—spirits of vengeance, in some visible forms. *Cf.* "Leir", 1651-52 :

> "How canst thou suffer such outragius acts
> To be committed without just revenge?"

47. **To tame.........offences**—The old spelling of "vile" is 'vilde', the use being significant, as it puns on 'vilde' and 'wild,' the antonym to 'tame' ; 'mild'. **Offences**—offenders ; an instance of abstract for the concrete.

48. **It will come**—The necessary consequences are bound to follow. *N.B.* This effective metrically short line is meant to allow Albany a pause in the process of his emotional agitation, before he reaches the climax of his speech.

49-50. **Humanity must.................deep**—Ponet ("Short treatise on Politic Power", (1556) argues that if there were no acceptance of authority, "the rich would oppress the poor, and the poor seek the destruction of the rich, to have that he had : the mighty would destroy the weak, and as Theodoretus sayeth, the great fish eat up the small, and the weak seek revenge on the mighty ; and so one seeking the other's destruction all at length should be undone and come to destruction." *Cf.* 'Troilus and Cressida", I. iii. 123-24 :

> Must make perforce an universal prey
> And last eat up himself."

50. **Milk-liver'd**—White-livered ; cowardly ; pusillanimous ; mean-spirited ; a bloodless liver signifies cowardice. *Cf.* "II Henry IV", IV. iii. 113 ; "The second property of your excellent sherris is the warming of the blood ; which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice."

51. **That...........wrongs**—who has a cheek, which readily receives blows and head which easily yields to all kinds of humiliations.

52-53. **What hast...........suffering**—who does not have an eye to distinguish between what can be honourably borne and what should be resented at ?

53-55. **That not...........mischief**—She means : my father is a villain in the making, but has been punished even before he could accomplish his villainous objective and you are a simpleton in being compassionate with him. In his pregnant note, Muir observes the following :

"Apparently she refers to Lear, as the news of Gloucester's punishment has not yet arrived and she would not expect her husband to have heard of it. The implication is that Lear is a villain because he is in league with France. The French invasion is the 'wrong'. Albany is suffering meekly ; and Goneril returns to the subject after referring to Lear's punishment. Molone, however, thinks that Goneril is referring not to Lear but to the King of France ; and Furness and Kittredge believe that she means that only fools will pity Albany if he is defeated or dethroned without striking a blow. This last interpretation seems to me highly unlikely, since Goneril harps on Albany's feebleness and foolishness not on his villainy ; and

she regards the repelling of the invader not as mischief but as a patriotic duty. I think 'villains' can scarcely apply to the King of France, since he has not been punished, though it might conceivably mean that he is about to be defeated."

55. **Where's thy drum**—where are your armed forces ?

56. **Noiseless**—not resounding with the alarums and excursions, concomitant with warlike preparations.

57. **The.........threat**—"is already threatening your rule."

N.B. This is an emendation by Jennens of the Quartos, which read : 'thy state begins thereat ; thy slaier begins threats.

58. **Moral**—moralizing *Cf*. "As You Like It," II. vii. 28 :

".................I did hear

The motley fool thus moral on the time."

60-61. **Proper...........woman**—Deformity appropriate to the devil, seems more horrible when it belongs to a woman, merely because of inappropriateness in her case. **Proper deformity**—deformity, which is the peculiar property of the devil, *i.e*., belongs to it as an individual quality. 'Proper' used in its Latin sense, 'proprius'—belonging to oneself alone. Delius thus explains : "deformity which conceals itself under a pleasing, fair outside, and which appears all the more horrid from its external contrast,' comparing "Twelfth Night," II. ii. 30. "Proper-false", *i.e*., externally ; internally false.

62. **thou...........thing**—O, you, whose genuine self is concealed by a woman's shape ; her true nature being that of a fiend. **Self-cover'd**—it can be variously explained :

(i) having the genuine self-concealed by a woman's shape ;

(ii) having assumed the appearance of a fiend, so concealing your woman's self ;

(iii) "hidden from thyself"—(Kinnear) ;

(iv) "Thou perverted creature, who hast covered thyself with the hideousness only proper to a fiend"—(Clarke) ;

(v) "dressed in one's native semblance, Goneril having betrayed her wickedness by changing countenance.—(Schmidt).

63. **Be...........feature**—Don't make your outward appearance look like that of a monster. Presumably, Goneril's passion reflects itself in her face which is distorted with rage

Feature—the whole outward appearance, and not merely her face. *Cf.* "Leir", 2581 :

"Nay, peace thou monster shame unto thy sexe."

Were't my fitness—if it were proper for me ; if it become me ; if I consider it worthy of my character.

64. **Blood**—instinct ; impulse ; disposition ; passion.

65. **Apt enough**—quite ready.

66. **Howe'er**—but although.

68. **Marry**—Corrupt from of 'By Mary', *i.e.*, the Mother of Christ, to avoid the profanation or its penalties : the speech is here obstructed, as the messenger enters. **Mew**—It is frequently used as an interjection. Goneril seems to imitate cat's noise, signifying that Albany is effeminate. Ridley thus interprets : "If all that is troubling you is the difference in sex, put off your manhood (mew,—moult, shed) and I shall be happy to meet you on equal terms."

71. **Going**—while going.

73. **Bred**—brought up in his household. **Thrill'd with remorse**—deeply moved by the feelings or compassion. **Thrill'd**—excited ; moved ; pierced. **Remorse**—compassion ; Shakespeare frequently uses in this sense.

74, **Oppos'd.........act**—opposed his person against that hideous act ; interposed himself between the perpetrator of the crime and his victim. **Bending his sword**—drawing and holding it pointed towards his master.

76. **Fell'd him dead**—In the midst of them he struck him dead. *N.B.* the messenger's account suffers from deficiency.

77-78. **But not.........after**—But not without receiving that deadly stroke.

79. **Nether crimes**—those that are committed here below on the earth.

80. **Venge**—avenge.

81. **Both, both**—The reiteration shows, even the messenger was moved out of compassion, describing such a horrid deed.

83. **One...........well**—in so far as his death offers me an opportunity of annexing Regan's share to my own kingdom and

thus become the Queen of England, this news is tolerably good.

84-86. **But being.........life**—But the very fact that Regan is now a widow for that reason has the prospect of grabbing up as her husband, my beloved Edmund, threatens to pull down my ambitiously built castles, making my own life repulsive to me. *Cf.* "Coriolanus", II. i. 217 : "The buildings of my fancy."

86. **Another way**—because Cornwall has now altogether vanished from the picture.

87. **Tart**—sour ; unpleasant to the taste.

89. **Come**—*i.e.*, he had come.

90. **I met......again**—I met him, while he was returning.

92. **Inform'd against him**—gave information against his father, so as to prove the latter a traitor.

94-95. **I live to thank thee**—I must live with an objective, to express my gratitude to you.

97. **What more**—*i.e.*, in greater details, the sordid events that have recently occurred.

Act IV : Scene III

Analysis. We come upon the French camp at Dover, where the gentleman, whom Kent sent with his letter, narrates to him about "the demonstration of grief," which thrilled the heart of Cordelia on her reading the letter. The gentleman said that Cordelia's passion was roused but she could restrain it, while

> "......patience and sorrow strove,
> Who should express her goodliest ?"

Her smiles and tears were "sunshine and rain at once," in a better, more beautiful and luxuriant manner, as her smiles were not marred by the tears as the sunshine by the rain. Like red cherry her lips were and on them played her "happy smilets" frolicsomely. Her tears departing from the eyes "as pearls from diamonds dropp'd", presents to us a picture, sweet and beautiful, beyond the power of words to describe, though Shakespeare employed only words to depict it so marvellously well.

"The poor distressed" Lear is in the town, and sometimes in his lucid intervals, remembers the purpose of the people gathering round him, but he would refuse to see his daughter to whom he wronged and hence the compunction stinging him deep to his heart, accompanied by a singeing shame. Kent proposes to take the gentleman with him to his master Lear and leave him there to attend on him, and as for himself, an important cause for some time would oblige him to remain in concealment.

The entire scene is omitted in the Folio. The reason, which can be inferred, is that from the actor's point of view it is not essential to the development of the plot. It, however, serves to the readers, a useful purpose ; it throws the further light, so as to illuminate the character of Cordelia for whose reappearance, it prepares us. It shows that Lear's madness need not disappoint us altogether, as "in his better tune" he feels conscious of his whereabouts. Besides, this scene explains the departure of the King of France, his absence being essential to the action of the rest of the play.

Notes

S. D. **A Gentleman**—the same, whom Kent had sent, with his letter, acting as his messenger, to Cordelia (III. i).

1-2. **Why......the reason**—Shakespeare has shown the departure of the King of France, with a specific purpose, *viz.*, his desire to make Cordelia the chief figure in the struggle on behalf of Lear. In case the King had remained, the objective of the dramatist could not have been achieved. His departure signifies that Cordelia, in his absence, has to fight against the foes of her father, even though without an adequate support. "His absence enhances the beauty and pathos of Cordelia's unaided ministrations and efforts to rescue her father." Steevens comments on this issue thus :

"The King of France being no longer a necessary personage, it was fit that some pretext for getting rid of him should be formed before the play was too near advanced towards a conclusion. Decency required that a monarch should not be silently shuffled into the pack of insignificant characters, and therefore his dismission (which could be effected only by a sudden recall to his own dominions) was to be accounted for before the audience.

3. **Something......state**—Some business of the state, which he had left unfinished ; this seems to be merely an excuse for getting rid of a personage, whose presence is but superfluous in regard to the further development of the plot.

4. **Imports**—implies ; portends.

7. **Who**—*i.e.*, whom, for the instances, where inflection is ignored, see Abbott, § 274. **General**—as a general so as to command the troops.

9. **Letters**—a letter, see note on I. v. 1.

12. **Trill'd**—trickled. Walker cites Jonson, "Every Man Out of His Humour,'iii. 2; How he wept, if you mark'd it ! did you see how the tears trill'd ?" In this sense, the word "is merely a particular use of 'trill'=to turn round and round."
—(Skeat).

Cf. Middle English 'trillen', which has been used by Chaucer in the sense 'to turn round' from a Scandinavian word 'trilla'=to roll.

13. **Delicate**—lovely ; delightful.

13-14. **A queen...........passion**—*i.e.*, she could overcome passionate feelings.

17. **Who.........goodliest**—as to who should impart to her most beautiful expression.

18. **Sunshine and rain at once**—Steevens quoted Henry Wolton, "A courtlie controversie of Cupid's Cautels," 1578, p. 289: "Who hath viewed in the spring time, raine and sunneshine in one moment, might beholde the troubled countenance of the gentlewoman, after she had read and over-read the letters."

18-19. **Her......way**—were like sunshine and rain together, but in a more beautiful and more luxuriant manner. Many explanations have been given to these words, but that of Boaden is by far the most convincing :

"Her smiles and tears were like a better way." That is Cordelia's smiles and tears were like the conjunction of sunshine and rain, in a better way or manner. Now, in what, did this better way consist ? Why, simply in the smiles seeming unconscious of the tears; whereas the sunshine has a watery look through the falling drops of rain—'those happy smiles.... seem'd not to know what guests were in her eyes."

19. **Smilets**—little smiles ; "a token of gladness, scarcely definite enough to be called smiles."

20. **Ripe**—red like the cherry. *Cf.* "Venus and Adonis", 1103 : "ripe-red cherries." **Seem'd**—so is Pope's emendation: the Quarto reads 'seeme'.

21. **Which**—*i.e.*, these guests, the tears.

22. **As pearls...... dropp'd** —"Shakespeare has frequently denominated tears, as 'pearls' and once refers to the eyes as diamonds. It implies that Cordelia's eyes were shining with tears, as well as naturally beautiful."

24. **If all......it**—If all persons could make the sorrow in them to look so beautiful. It may be marked, the Cordelia's magic charm could lend beauty and grandeur even to sorrow. **Question**—speech ; not used here in the sense of 'enquiry'. **Made......question** ?—"Did she enter into no conversation with you ? In this sense Shakespeare frequently uses this word (*i.e.*, question), and not simply as an act of interrogation. Did she give you to understand her meaning 'by words', as well as by the foregoing external testimonies of sorrow ?"

—(Steevens).

25. **Heav'd**—uttered with difficulty.

29. **Let..............believ'd**—Let none believe in the existence of pity, as such, in the world. **Believ'd**—believed to exist.

31. **Clamour moisten'd**—her outcries were drowned in a flood of tears.

"Having her emotion calmed by a flood of tears, as the storm is assuaged by a shower of rain."—(Craig), who cites "Macbeth", I. vii. 25 :

"And pity
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind."

"If we do not hyphen the expression, we must take moisten'd as the past tense." The Quarto reads : "Clamour moisten'd her."

If the hyphen is omitted the phrase can mean "exclamations moistened with tears." (Heath). "Moistened clamour" = "She drowned her exclamations with tears" (Capell).

32. **To deal...... alone**—to struggle and conquer her grief in privacy. **Stars**—Kent, being old-fashioned, not unlike Gloucester is too ready to believe in the 'influence' of stars, that determine the dispositions of human beings.

33. **Conditions**—temperaments ; qualities ; dispositions.

34. **Else one...............make**—otherwise "the same husband and the same wife"—(Johnson). **Oneself**—one and the same. **Make**—partner ; consort ; mate ; Icelandic 'maki''—a mate ; in this sense the word is frequently used in Middle English, so also in Elizabethan.

39. **Sometime**—sometimes ; the two are used in the same sense interchangeably by Shakespeare. **In his better tune**—in his lucid intervals ; when his mental disorder is diminished.

41. **Yield**—consent ; yield to our entreaties that he should see his daughter.

42. **Sovereign**—overpowering; overmastering. **Elbows**—"so stands at his elbow and reminds him of the past"—(Wright) ; forcibly thrusts him back : his compunction for his cruelty towards her keeps him at a distance from her.

34. **Turn'd her**—*i.e.*, turned her out ; expelled. *Cf.* "As You Like It", III. i. 18 : "Do this expediently and turn him going."

44. **Foreign casualties**—hazards abroad ; mischances in an alien land. **Dear rights**—her rights, whereby she was entitled to the share in the kingdom; 'dear'—precious', materially affecting her welfare.

45. **Dog-hearted**—relentless ; merciless ; fierce.

Albany calls them "tiger-sisters." *N.B.* Shakespeare has been mostly uncomplimentary about the dog.

49. **'Tis so...... afoot**—It is as has been reported, they are on the march. The news, that they are out in the field, is reliable.

51. **Some dear cause**—some reason of great significance.

52. **Will in...........awhile**—will oblige me to remain in concealment for some time. We are given almost no hint in regard to the purport of this weighty reason.

ACT IV : SCENE IV

Analysis. Cordelia reports to the doctor about the miserable plight of Lear, wandering about, "As mad as the vex'd sea," singing loudly and crowned with luxuriant fumitory and furrow-weeds. The doctor tells her that above all he needed rest and nursing to restore his shattered reason. There are many quite efficacious medicinal herbs, "whose power will close the eye of anguish". Cordelia desires that her tears may fertilize all the unknown healing herbs and undiscovered plants, so to cure her good father of his extreme mental agony. A messenger announces the approach of the British armed forces, at which Cordelia declares that they are already prepared for the war, which is motivated by "no blown ambition," but by her dear father's love, and "our aged father's right."

In this small scene, the topic of Lear's insanity is sustained and Cordelia, sweet and innocent Cordelia, who since the opening scene of the play has been kept in our minds only by certain allusions, again reappears. The scene scarcely helps the action, except to impress on us her anxiety for Lear's recovery; nonetheless, it is noteworthy how the dramatist continues to show himself tender of patriotic sentiments. (Cordelia's words in lines 23-28).

Notes

1. **Even now**—only a short while ago.

2. **The vex'd sea**—the tempestuous sea ; tossed or agitated by the wind. *Cf.* "Tempest", I. ii. 229 :

"From the still-vex'd Bermoothes there she's hid."

3. **Rank**—luxuriant. **Fumiter**—fumitory ; a plant akin to 'Corydalis'. Farren, in "Essays on Mania", 1833, p. 73, says that its leaves are of a bitter taste and the juice was formerly employed in cases of hypochondrism and black jaundice. *Cf.* "Shepherd's Calender" :

"fumitory too—a name
That superstition holds to fame."

'Fumitory', from French 'fume-terre'=the smoke of the earth, so called because "it springeth out of the earth in great quantity." **Furrow-weeds**—weeds that spring up in the furrows, made by the plough.

4. **With hardocks..................cuckoo-flow'rs**—Farren calls attention to the character of all these plants, that they are of 'bitter, biting, poisonous, pungent, lurid, and distracting properties. Thus Lear's crown is admirably descriptive or emblematic of the sources and variety of the disease under which he labours. The mixture of such flowers and plants could not be the effect of chance'. **Hardocks**—The hoar or white dock—(Craig) ; so reads Folio. *N.B.* Hanmer prefers the reading 'burdocks'. **Hemlock**--poisonous narcotic plant; "one of the most poisonous of a suspicious family (the Umbelliferae)......Yet the hemlock adds largely to the beauty of our hedge-rows ; its spotted tall stems and its finely cut leaves make it a handsome weed and the dead stems and dried umbels are marked features in the winter appearance of the hedges. (Ellacombe, "Plant-lore of Shakespeare, pp. 32-33). **Nettles**—"That throngs about graves" —(Blunden.) **Cuckoo-flow'rs**—also called "Ladies' Smocks, (cardamine pratensis) and 'wild water cress'. They flower for the most part in April and May when the cuckoo begins to sing her pleasant notes."

Cf. "Love's Labour's Lost", V. ii. 906 :

"Cuckoo-buds of yellow hue" :

These are identified with cukoo-flowers by Ellacombe. It is also identified with 'Bed-lam Cowslip,' which "would be an apt flower for the mad Lear." The Greeks and Romans use "cardamine pratensis" for almost all affections of the head and according to Farren, it was considered a fit remedy for epilepsy, convulsion and the like ailments of the brain.

5. **Darnel**—Blunden calls it "sickly and usurping." It also has narcotic powers. Ellacombe says that it is a "general name for any hurtful weeds, but its seeds become mixed with the true wheat and so in Dorsetshire—and perhaps in other parts—it has the name of 'cheat', from its false likeness to wheat." **Idle weeds**—unprofitable or worthless weeds, as opposed to the 'sustaining corn'.

6. **Sustaining corn**—nourishing corn ; "the staff of life" to us. **Century**—So reads the Quarto, the Folio has 'centery'. Johnson prefers "sent'ry" hundred soldiers ; company of a hundred men. Parrett takes it as an allusion to Lear's hundred knights, now restored to him. Craig adopts 'sentry' and argues

that 'century' is an anachronism, since Lear lived before the Roman occupation.

8. **What.........wisdom**—How far can the power of human wisdom help ?

N.B. 'Can'=knows ; used in its etymological sense. "Hamlet", IV. vii. 85. "They can well on horse-back." Bacon. "Essays, of Great Place" : "In evil, the best condition is not to will ; the second, not to can." 'Wisdom'=medical science ; healing art.

9. **Bereaved**—robbed ; impaired ; the senses without the organizing mind behind them.

8-9. **What.........sense**—What is in the power of man's wisdom to do in regard to restoring his reason ?

10. **Helps**—cures. **All my outward worth**—the entire wealth that is in my possession.

11. **There is means**—Kellogg suggests that Shakespeare was wiser than many a doctor of his day in his prescription.

12. **Foster-nurse**—nourisher.

14. **Simples operative**—medicinal herbs, quite efficacious.

13-15. **That to...........anguish**—to induce sleep in him ; there are many kinds of medicinal herbs, quite effective in their power to close the sufferer's eyes. **Anguish**—pain and agony ; physical as well as mental.

15. **Bless'd secrets**—Those herbs whose healing power hitherto remains unknown.

16. **Virtues**—"efficacious medicinal plants"—(Kittredge.)

17. **Spring with my tears**—Watered and thus fertilized them by my tears. **Aidant and remediate**—"helpfully remedial"; helpful as well as healing ; curative as well as conducive to a speedy recovery.

19-20. **Lest his......lead it**—Lest the uncurbed fury of his insanity should be instrumental to his collapse ; his life at the moment being out of reason's control.

22. **Our preparation**—our forces ready for battle.

25. **Therefore**—because my primary business is to impart relief and succour to you.

26. **Importun'd**—importunate.

2J. **Blown ambition**—ambition puffed up ; inflated with the pride of conquest.

Act IV : Scene V

Analyis. In a room in Gloucester's castle, the widowed Regan puts certain questions to Oswald so as to elicit from him purport of the letter which her sister wrote to Lord Edmund and which he was carrying it now. Oswald would not yield to her in this matter. Regan tells him that it was extremely unwise to have allowed that blind traitor (Gloucester) to remain alive, for now wherever he goes, "he moves all hearts against us." She thinks that Edmund too moved by compassion has gone to put his father out of his miserable plight "to despatch the nighted life", as well as to "descry the strength of th' enemy." Regan entreats Oswald to let her "unseal the letter" and be acquainted with the contents therein, for which she would give sufficient proofs of her greater regard to him. Oswald does not submit to her ; at which Regan discloses that Goneril has neither love nor regard for her husband and while Lord Edmund was there, she cast her amorous glances at him to win him, but in the context of the situation, she alone has the rightful claim for Edmund, and therefore she (Goneril should be wise enough to withdraw her suit of marrying him. She gives Oswald a token of her love to be conveyed to Edmund, who should be apprised of the entire situation and whatever she has hitherto spoken to him, and in case he happened to see Glucester, anybody putting him to death, would be handsomely rewarded by her. Oswald before departing shows his faith in the side to which he belongs.

Though this scene seems scarcely necessary tc the development of the action, yet it helps us in discerning how that jealousy, the green-eyed monster, has sprung up in between Goneril and Regan, and thereby it gives us a further clue towards the denouement.

Notes

2. **With much ado**—Albany could be pleased to lead the army, but only after much fuss and persuasion. He was put on tenter-hooks how to take weapons against the army fighting in the interests of Lear.

4. **Lord.........at home?**—Is it true that Lord Edmund, who accompanied her (Regan's) sister home, did not speak at all to her husband ? See note under (lines 16-17).

6. **Import**—purport.

8. **Serious matter**—an important and urgent business.

9. **Great ignorance**—an utter folly ; extremely unwise and unpolitic.

12. **In misery.........**—These words are ironical in their effect.

12-13. **To.........life**—to put him out of the misery of his darkened life, because of his blindness. **Descry**—discover ; ascertain ; espy.

16-17. **Our...........dangerous**—Regan speaks deceptively to delay the delivery of the letter, presumably to know its contents for herself.

N.B. The seeds of suspicion and jealousy actively begin to work in her heart. Malone, in his valuable note observes the following :

"It could be of no consequence to Regan whether Edmund spoke with Goneril at home, as they had travelled together from the Earl of Gloucester's castle to the Duke of Albany's palace, and had on the road sufficient opportunities for laying those plans of which Regan was apprehensive. On the other hand, Edmund's abrupt departure, without even speaking to Duke to whom he was sent on a commission, could not but appear mysterious and excite her jealousy."

18. **Charg'd my duty**—earnestly enjoined me to convey the letter, without the least delay on my part.

20. **Word**—by word of mouth ; verbally. **Belike**—probably; maybe.

21. **Some things**—That Goneril and Edmund passionately love each other, singes her heart in the fury of jealous suspicions.

22. **Madam, I had rather.........**—Verplanck (cited by Furness) shows "the Steward more and more 'duteous to the vices' of its self-chosen masters," and that "Shakespeare has here incidentally painted, without the formality of a regular moral lesson, one of the very strange and very common self-

contradictions of our enigmatical nature. Zealous, honourable, even self-sacrificing fidelity,—sometimes to a chief or leader, sometimes to a party, a faction, or a gang,—appears to be so little dependent on any principle of virtuous duty, that it is often found strongest among those who have thrown off the common restraints of morality."

"I know not well, why Shakespeare gives to Oswald who is a mere factor of wickedness, so much fidelity. He now refuses the letter ; and afterwards, when he is dying, thinks only how it may be safely delivered."—(Johnson).

25. **Oeilliads**—amorous glances ; Cotgrave ; 'oeilliade'= amorous look ; affectionate wink ; wanton aspect ; passionate caste of the eye.

26. **Of her bosom**—in her confidence. *Cf.* "Julius Caesar," V. i. 7: "I am in their bosoms" ; and Beaumont and Fletcher, "A King and No King", I. i : "Should I chase a companion, for honesty to interchange my bosom with, it should be you."

27. **I, Madam** ?—an affected surprise.

28. **In understanding**—with full knowledge ; not merely out of guessing, but having some solid grounds to believe.

29. **Take this note**—take a serious note of what I speak to you. Delius seems to be presumptuous in thinking that Regan refers to her letter. "This is not a letter, but a remark, therefore observe what I am saying."—(Johnson).

30. **Have talk'd**—are engaged : "are affianced to one another ;" have come to an understanding on the issue.

31. **Convenient**—suitable ; fitting. **For my hand**—as a husband to me.

32. **Gather**—by way of inference ; deduce more from my hints.

33. **This**—may be either a ring or trinket, as a token of her love to be conveyed to Lord Edmund. 'This' may suggest a letter ; but only one letter, viz., of Goneril, found on Oswald after his death ; but Lord Campbell, ("Tragic Drama," 1904. p. 241), suggests "Shakespeare may choose this way of revealing Regan's passion, but would not wish to weaken the scene of Oswald's death by the complication of two letters."

35. **Call her wisdom**—summon up all her wisdom, and abandon her ambition of marrying Edmund.

38. **Preferment**—a handsome reward.

39. **Would.........him**—Oswald's wish is gratified but not without its concomitant fatal consequences to himself.

Act IV : Scene VI

Analysis. The scene is laid in the country near Dover. Gloucester and Edgar, dressed like a peasant, appear. Edgar leads the blind Gloucester, who finds the voice of the former altered. Edgar tells him,

> "In nothing am I chang'd,
> But in my garments."

Then Edgar beautifully describes the cliff ; the crows and jackdaw flying in the midway air, "show scarcely so gross as beetles," the person, hanging by a rope several fathom from the top of the impending rocks to gather samphire ; the fishermen walking upon the beach, appearing like mice ; the cock-boat ; the murmuring waves dashing against the pebble chafes, all present to us the panorama, which is vivid as well as startling, so much so that even the blind Gloucester might see through his mind all this and measure the attitude of the cliff. Gloucester offers another purse to Edgar saying "in it a jewel, well worth a poor man's taking." Edgar baulks the idea of suicide in Gloucester by pretending that he does actually fall from the cliff, "so many fathoms down precipitating wherefrom he "perpendicularly fell" and it was a miracle that he survived such a tremendous trial. Edgar now quits the part of poor Tom, whom he describes as a foul fiend, who has been leading Gloucester to destruction. Edgar advises Gloucester to "bear free and patient thoughts." At this Lear enters fantastically decked out with wild flowers. Gloucester recognizes the voice of the King, who also recognizes him, "I know thee well enough, thy name is Gloucester." The attendants enter and take charge of Lear to bring him to Cordelia and the doctor. Lear escapes, and, running away, is pursued by the attendants. Oswald attempts to slay Gloucester, who was publicly proclaimed as a traitor and a price was put on his head, to raise his fortunes, but Edgar, who played the part of a yokel, not only saved Gloucester from being slain but also killed Oswald, "the post unsanctified of murtherous lechers". Oswald dies and Edgar obtains from his person a letter, written by Goneril to Edmund, and with this he thought to startle the Duke of Albany, whose life was plotted against in that by his own wife,

in conspiracy with Edmund. Edgar sets out afresh to find a place of shelter for his father.

This scene may conveniently be divided into three marked sections : (i) The scene between Edgar and Gloucester, with the description of the Dover ; (ii) The meeting of Lear and Gloucester, the mentally blind and the physically blind—the sufferers of the main-plot and the sub-plot ; and (iii) Edgar's slaying Oswald and getting possession of Goneril's letter, which enables the action to move towards denouement.

Lear's insanity has undergone a peculiar change from what it was in IV. iv. to now in IV. vi : it has become fitful and shows itself in his ability to follow any sequence of ideas to an end. His thoughts, however, revolve round the circumstances which brought about his present affliction. He still broods on Goneril and Regan and their husbands and above all, on the question of human justice. That he recognizes Gloucester makes us hopeful that his madness is not altogether hopeless.

Notes

1. **That same hill**—the cliff that you spoke of ; the same that Gloucester has desired to lead him to in IV. i. 73.

2. **How we labour**—how wearisome the ascent is.

3. **Even**—level.

5-6. **Your...........anguish**—Muir suggests that 'anguish' probably means the physical pain Gloucester is suffering rather than his grief at the loss of his eyes. *Cf.* Florio, IV. 70 : "Our senses are not only altered but many times dulled by the passions of the mind."

7. **Alter'd**—"Edgar alters his voice in order to pass afterwards for a malignant spirit."—(Johnson).

8. **In......matter**—in more comprehensible language and more coherently.

11. **You're better......spoken**—Whatever you speak is with better accent, propriety and grace. *N.B.* Shakespeare marks the change by making him speak in verse.

12-25. **Come on......headlong**—Two reasons can be given for justifying the necessity of the following description :

(i) Edgar wished to impress on the blind Gloucester the great height of the cliff and the horror of a fall from it, in

order that later Gloucester's pretended observation might seem the more wonderful, and

(ii) The dramatist wished to emphasize to the audience the tragic character of the scene and the horror of Gloucester's meditated act, *viz.*, of committing suicide, and in the absence of stage machinery this could be done merely by description.

Johnson has criticized the description on the ground that "the enumeration of details counteracts the great effect of the prospect and the "overwhelming idea (of destruction) is dissipated and enfeebled from the instant that the mind can restore itself to the observation of the particulars and diffuse its attention to distant objects." But he forgot that a vague generalized description would not have given any idea of the altitude of the cliff to one who was blind and hence all these details and greatly to the impression of immense height. Addison remarks that the man who could read this description "without being giddy has a very good head or a very bad one." There is however a discrepancy in between the description and the assumed character of Edgar. What the playwright saw himself he has brilliantly described here.

Lessing, in the supplement to his "Lacoon", compares this description of Dover cliff with Milton's description of the height whence the King of Glory beholds Chaos :

> "On heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore
> They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss,
> Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
> Up from the bottom turn'd by furious winds
> And surging waves, as mountains to assault
> Heaven's height, and with the centre mix the pole."—
> "Paradise Lost"—vii. 210.

Lessing says : "This depth is far greater than Dover cliff, and yet the description of it produces no effect, because there is nothing visible to make it real to us, whereas in Shakespeare, this is so admirably managed by the gradual lessening of the various objects."

13. **Dizzy**—*i.e.*, "how dizzy it makes one feel."

14. **Choughs**—jackdaws ; jackdaw is a European bird, something like a crow, but smaller. It can be taught to make sounds imitating human speech. Harting, "The Ornithology of

Shakespeare, p. 116, says : "It is not improbable that the chough, which affects precipices and sea-cliffs, may once have frequented the cliffs at Dover ; but whatever may have been the case formerly, this haunt, if it ever was one, has long since been deserted."

15. **Gross**—large.

16. **Hangs**—hangs by the rope. **Sampire**—samphire, herbe de Saint Pierre, an aromatic plant, used for pickles. It has fleshy leaflets, growing abundantly on rocks by the sea. Tollet quotes from Smith's "History of Waterford" (1774): "Samphire is grown in great quantity on mostof the sea-cliffs in this country; it is terrible to see how people gather it, hanging by a rope several fathom the top of the impending rocks, as it were in the air." Skeat points out that 'sampire' is more correct form than 'samphire', representing as it does a former pronunciation

19. **Tall anchoring bark**—large vessel at anchor. *Cf.* "Hamlet", II. i. 79 : "That he may bless this bay with his tall ship."

20. **Cock**—Cock-boat ; a small ship's boat.

22. **Unnumber'd**—innumerable. **Idle**—barren ; unprofitable. **Pebble**—often used as a plural, as 'pearl' for 'pearls.'

24-25. **And the...........headlong**—And feeling dizzy I may plunge down headlong. "His body, to which sight belongs, falls with the actual organs of sight." **Deficient**—defect of the senses, *cf.* "Othello", I. iii. 63 :

> "For nature so preposterously to err,
> Being not deficient, blind or lame of sense,
> Sans witchcraft could not."

29. **Another purse**—one purse was given earlier by Gloucester to Edgar in IV. i. 63.

30. **Fairies**—Kittredge suggests that this refers to the superstition that hidden treasure is guarded by fairies and that they make it multiply miraculously in the possession of the discoverer.

31. **Prosper it with thee**—my it bring good fortune to you.

32. **Let.........going**—Gloucester wants to be assured that Edgar has gone, before he takes the leap, and it is possible only by sound.

34-35. **Why I.........it**—"Why I trifle is to cure it" and "My trifling is done to cure."

N.B. Such a confusion is common in a colloquial speech. Abbott, §411, points out that this sentence is a confusion of two constructions and hence the synthetical peculiarity. "Edgar sees that the only way to keep his father from suicide is to make him believe that heaven has interposed miraculously to prevent his self-destruction. After the 'miracle' Gloucester feels that the gods have pronounced so clearly against his suicide that he must continue to live and bear his afflictions."—(Verity). Edgar wished that Gloucester should live like a stoic.

37. **Shake.........off**—Not revolting against but calmly submitting to your omnipotent will, that so afflicts me.

38-39. **Fall.........wills**—be rebellious and so falling into a worse sin than suicide and thus to despise your irresistible will. **Opposeless**—irresistible ; formed on the analogy of resistless. Other adjectives terminating in—'less' are generally from nouns, as 'noiseless', 'careless', 'purposeless' etc. For the suffix 'less'=not able to be, see Abbott, § 446.

40. **Snuff**—the burnt out or smouldering wick of a candle; his brief candle is nearly burnt out, his body which his fit to be despised and discarded as distinguished from the soul, "The useless remnant of my life."—(Nichol Smith).

40-41. **My snuff.........out**—I should bid good-bye to this contemptible part of my nature, and let my shrivelled and decrepit physique burn and be reduced to ashes.

41. **If.........him**—The dramatic irony intensifies the pathos.

43. **Conceit**—imagination; illusion; that which is concerned whether the conception be true or a false one."

Cf. "Lucrece", 1298 : "Conceit and grief an eager combat fight."

43-44. **And yet......itself yields to the theft**—I should be ill-advised to make him think I have left hlm, for I don't know how it is, nonetheless, it is a fact that the imagination or the illusion that he has fallen from the top of the cliff is enough to slay him, especially when he is so very readily desirous to die. "The illusion of death may actually cause death." *Cf.* Montaigne, (Essays, Florio's Translation, I, xx.) : "Some there are

that through fear anticipate the hangman's hand ; as he did, whose friends having obtained his pardon, and putting away the cloth wherewith he was hoodwinkt, that he might hear it (the pardon) read, was found stark head upon the scaffold, wounded, only by the stroke of imagination."

43. **I know not how**—I know not how it is, nevertheless it is a glaring fact, an instance of elliptical expression.

44-45. **When.........theft**—ween a man is quite willing and rather anxious to be robbed of his life.

46. **By.........past**—By this time the very thought that he is dead might be a thing of past and hence no thought as such.

47. **Ho, you............you, Sir**—Edgar here changes his character and pretends to be a passer-by on the beach at the bottom of thc Dover cliff.

48. **Pass**—die ; pass away in reality. "We still use the word 'passing bell'."

50. **Gossamer**—"the filaments floating in the air"; literally, it means 'goose-summer', being so called from their resemblance to dawn and the time of their appearance. *Cf.* "Romeo and Juliet", II. vi. 18:

> "............................the gossamer
> That idles in the wanton summer air."

These threads aro due to a species of spider, but were formerly thought to be a kind of mist produced by an action of the morning sun on the due.—(Verity).

51. **Precipitating**—falling headlong ; now the word is used only transitively.

52. **Thou'dst......egg**—you would have been blown into shivers or small fragments like those of an egg.

54. **At each**—one at the top of another, fastened end to end, in a long line ; "placed at the extremity of each other." —(Theobold).

55. **Fell**—fallen ; Shakespeare sometimes uses past tense and the past participle interchangeably.

56. **Thy......miracle**—It is miraculous that you are saved.

58. **Chalky bourn**—the chalk cliff, that confines or acts as the boundary of the sea.

"Bourn"="defencive pale, limiting bound"—(Craig). *Cf.* "Troilus and Cressida", II. iii 260 :

"………I will not praise thy wisdom,
Which, like a bourn, a pale, a shore confines
Thy spacious and dilated parts."

59. **A-height**—on high ; aloft ; 'a' is from Old English 'an' =on. **Shrill-gorg'd**—Shrill-throated, shrill-voiced with high notes.

62-63. **Is………death**—Should the wretched not even be allowed to end their wretchedness by death ?

64-65. **When……will**—when a miserable man could, by putting an end to his life, cheat the wrathful tyrant and thus defeat his stubborn purpose.

66. **Feel you**—Have you any feeling as such, can you use?

67. **Above all strangeness**—not merely strange but something miraculous.

72. **Whelk'd**—"twisted, convolved"—(Malone), covered with whelks or knobs. A 'whelk' was a pimple ; the face of Bradolph in "Henry V", was all bubukles, and whelks, and knobs, and the summoner in Chaucer had his face "whekes white" and "knobbes", which could not be cured by any ointment. *Cf.* "Metamorphosis," (1593) ; "Yea, even as gladly as the folk whose brows sometime did bear a pair of whelked horns." (Book X). **Enridged**—furrowed ; with waves like ridges. **Horns whelk'd……sea**—horns twisted and curled like the crested waves of the sea, the waves as they roll in ridges"—(Deighton).

73. **Father**—a term of reverence used while addressing an old man.

74. **Clearest**—"The purest, the most free from evil"—(Johnson) ; "bright, pure, glorious"—(Schmidt) ; "upon and righteous"—(Theobold). Those that perform miracles to convinch the people who do not believe. Reyher (cited by Muir) says : "This word, which expresses the pure and luminous essence of the divinity, reflects the clear and profound nature of the man who utters it."

74-75. **Who make………impossibilities**—who, by achieving things, considered to be impossible by men, create for

themselves claims for honour from them. "Who derive to themselves honour and reverence from man, by doing things which he reckons impossible"—(Capell). *Cf.* "Luke" xxviii, 27 ; "The things which are impossible with men are possible with gods"—(cited by Furness). It was impossible for Gloucester to have lived ; if he had taken such a leap as he is led to believe he has taken, unless it had been the intervention of the omnipotent gods, to whom consequently he is bound to be respectful.

76. **I do......now**—The right sense come to me again, which I had lost when I was audacious to think of relieving myself of my sorrows, even without waiting the good pleasure of the gods.

77-78. **Till it.........die**—till the affliction is if gives the signal for release, so as to let me die a natural death ; less probably, "till affliction recognizes that I have been afflicted enough and itself dies"—(Muir).

81. **Free**—free from encumbrances and anxieties ; untroubled ; unconcerned, since a sorrowful man is but a slave to his grief.

82-83. **The safer.........thus**—"He can't be sene to dress himself up like this"—(Armour) ; A man in the perfect possession of his sense would not get himself up in this grotesque garb"—(Craig). The 'eyesight' is probably the safer sense; *Cf.* the proverbial expression "seeing is believing". Later on Gloucester regrets for "the stiffness of his vile sense."

84. **Touch me**—bring me to book ; punish me for unlawful conduct ; 'touch'=harm, injure ; *Cf.* " I Henry IV," II. iv. 300 :

"The liar will not touch the true prince."

Coining—Muir thus comments, "Lear's mad speeches have an undertone of meaning, and although he leaps from one subject to another, it is often possible to see that there is a subconscious connection between them. 'Coining', which was a royal prerogative, leads to the thought of 'press money'. This suggests 'peace', which in turn suggests 'piece' and also a challenge and 'brown bills'. 'Bills' suggests 'bird', bird suggests an arrow in flight, and its target.........It may be mentioned that coining often had a sexual significance."

84—92. **No, they...........the word**—Edmund Blunden's analytical interpretation helps us to have a peep into the subconscious mind of Lear : "With poignant chances of recovery, no sooner discovered than destroyed, Lear passes into deeper insanity; his talk then leaps from one subject to another with wilder haste ; and still there is a contexture in it. He has now the additional confusion of the rumoured war with France among his principal motives. And so, when he has made his escape at Dover, and comes with his crown of weeds to the side of Gloucester and Edgar, he begins : "No, they can not touch me, for coining" ; the metaphor echoes, and he changes it into actuality, 'there's your press money'. 'He is the king himself', preparing recruits ; 'that fellow handles his bow like a crow-keeper'. Again we must see not only the fantasy of Lear, but the bird-boy, passing over the farm. 'Look, look ! a mouse' ; apparently a reminiscence of the classical proverb, certainly a Falstaffian comment on a supposed recruit's usefulness, and clearly a remark brought on by his spying a field-mouse in the corn. O ! well.flown bird', by no great extension of this, is his enthusiasm for falconry bursting forth as he sees the hawk drop on that mouse. We have from him a picture, both of the country circumstances and his life and times."

84. **I am the King himself**—I, being a sovereign, am legally entitled to coin money, wherewith to pay off the soldiers to be recruited for fighting against France.

85. **Side-piercing**—heart-rending ; causing an extreme grief in the heart, that cuts it very much like a knife.

86. **Nature's.........respect**—"A born King can never lose his natural rights."—(Schmidt). *N.B.* The relative importance of art and nature was often a subject of discussion in Elizabethan times.

87. **Press money**—earnest-money ; to be given at the moment, when the soldier is being recruited. *N. B.* 'Press' from the old French 'prester'=to lend'.

87-88. **Crow-keeper**—a scrare-crow ; a rustic employed for scaring the birds from the crops, he being armed with a bow and arrows ; the crow-boy was known as an archer for his clumsiness. *Cf.* "Romeo and Juliet," I, iv. 6 : "Scaring the ladies like a crow-keeper."

88. **Clothier's yard**—an arrow : the standard English arrow was a cloth-yard long ; and a good archer would draw it to the head. *Cf.* "The Ballad of Chevry Chase", 180-1 :

"An arrow of a cloth-yard long
Up to the head drew he."

89. **Will do't**—will assist in catching this mouse ; toasted cheese was considered a common bait in a mousetrap.

90. **There's my gauntlet**—I throw my gauntlet for you to take up, provided you are prepared to meet me in a combat. 'Gauntlet'=a leather glove plaited with steel, the throwing down of which was considered a challenge. Lear imagines himself as throwing down the gauntlet, *i.e.*, challenging a giant (many times stronger than he) on some point that has flitted through his mind.

91. **Brown bills**—brown billmen ; troops, armed with brown bills. A bill or halbred was painted brown to keep off rust ; and was a weapon half-pike, half-battle-axe, for thrusting and striking : the handle was five or six feet long, and the head consisted of a blade like a battle axe, balanced by a hook, the whole terminating in a point like a spear. **O ! well flown bird**—the falconer's cry when the hawk was successful, but Lear seems to refer to the flight of the arrow ; an exclamation on seeing a falcon pouncing on a mouse. Lear recalls his own good old days of hawking. As the falcon goes straight for the bird, his mind reverts to the image of the arrow, flying straight to its target. **I' th clout**—in the white mark (or bull's eye) ; in the centre of the target, popularly called as 'clout' ; hitting of which was to display the greatest possible skill.

92. **Hewgh**—presumably, an imitation of the whizzing sound, made by a flying arrow. **Word**—the password ; watch word. *Cf.* "Richard III", V. iii. 349 : "Our ancient word of courage, fair Saint George."

92-94. **Give the.........pass**—Edmund Blunden interprets this obscure line thus : Give the word', he finishes like a sentry. 'Sweet marjoram' says Edgar. It sounds 'aloof from the entire point' and yet Lear says 'pass'. And with good secret reason. Sweet marjoram was accounted according to Culpeper, a blessed remedy for diseases of the brain. Edgar was clearly a friend."

96. **Goneril..........beard** ! – The inner obsession of the extremely iniquitous Goneril makes Lear confound Gloucester's face with that of Goneril, as he envisages her now. **They**—*i.e.*, courtiers ; his mind flies back to the days when they flattered him by saying that though he was young, he had the wisdom of an old man.

97. **Like a dog**—as a dog, fawning on his master.

97-98. **I had......there**—told me that I had the wisdom of the age, even though I was not old enough to grow a beard.

98-99. **To say......said**—To agree with my vagaries of the mood, whether I was right or wrong like the wheedlers. Kittredge cites Hall's "Satires," vi. i :

> "Smiles on his master for a meale or two ;
> And loues him in his maw, loaths in his heart,
> Yet soothes. and yeas and nays on eyther part."

99-100. **"Ay" and......divinity**—It was but a poor theology that attempted to defy me with 'yes' and 'no', when I wanted the one or the other. 'Divinity'=theology. "The reference is to "Corinthians," i. 18 : "Our word to you was not yea and nay" (cited by Moberly).

101. **Would not peace**—would not be still.

102. **Smelt 'em out**—could see through their duplicity.

103. **Not men .....words**—men, not to be relied upon.

104. **Ague-proof**—exempted from the chilliness and its resultant quaking ; 'ague'=a fever, coming in periodical fits accompanied with shivering. Fr. 'aigu'=sharp.

105. **Trick**—peculiarity, the distinguishing mark ; a metaphor from heraldry. *Cf.* "Twelfth Night", II. v, 164 :

> "Put thyself into the trick of singularity."

106. **Every inch a king**—a king in every respect. "The word recalls Lear to the thought of sovereignty, with which he began".—(Kittredge).

106-116. **Ay, every..... lack soldiers**—mislined verse in Folio ; prose in Quarto.

107. **When......quakes**—When I am in wrath, see how terror-stricken are my subject ; 'the subject'—used collectively.

108. **Cause**—charge, offence.

113-114. **For......daughters**—"There is a dreadful irony in Lear's ignorance of truth".

115. **Luxury**—lust. *Cf.* "Hamlet", I. v. 83 :

"A couch of Luxury and damned incest."

Pell-mell—promiscuously : confusedly ; Cotgrave, "French Dictionary" : Pesele-mesle=pell-mall, confusedly, hand over head, all on a heap, one with other.

116. **Simp'ring**—smiling in a silly, affected style.

117. **Whose......snow**—appears to be frigidly chaste. **Forks**—"instruments then worn by women for keeping up their hair"—(H. C. Hart). *Cf.* Stubbes, Anatomy of Abuses" : "and lest it (the hair) should fall down, it is under-propped with forks, wire, and I cannot tell what." **Snow**—chastity.

118. **That minces virtue**—"who affects the coy timidity of virtue." "Cotgrave translates "faire la sadinette," 'to mince it, niceifie it, make it daintie, be very squemish, backward or coy.'

119. **Pleasure's name**—the very name of pleasure. Florio, iv. 131, remarks : "Wee have taught Ladies to blush, onely by hearing that named, which they nothing feare to doe." (Cited by Muir).

120. **Fitchew**—pole-act ; "a cant term for a prostitute"—(Dyce). **Soiled**—made so by wanton over-feeding during the spring. Craig quotes E. T. Evans, "Leicester Words" (1881): "to soil a horse" means "to give him green food in the house."

122. **Centaurs**—a fabulous race of beings shaped like a horse with the body of a man in place of the hors'se neck and head. "The Centaur is exactly the right image here.........it exhibits man as a rational animal."—Heilman, who also significantly remarks on Regan and Goneril : "The paradox is that these free minds, unburdened by any conventional or traditional allegiances, become slaves to the uncontrolled animal desire, mechanisms for the attainment of irrational objectives."

124. **Inherit**—possess ; hold sway.

125. **Beneath......fiend's**—Furness quotes from Ingleby the following : "Among the Heresies (August de Heres) that arose very early in the Church, there started out a Sect (called the Paterniani), possibly the spawn of the filthy Gnosticks ; whose opinion was that the upper parts of a man's body were

made indeed by God, but the lower Parts from the Girdle, they held, was made by the devil ; and very fond they grew of their fancy, which they thought gave them a Liberty to do with the devil's part what they please'd, so long as they reserv'd the rest unto God.

125-130. **There's hell......for thee** – Johnson and Jennens printed this as verse. Several editors treat it as prose ; here I have followed the arrangement of Muir.

127. **Pah, pah !**—exclamation for showing contempt or disgust.

128. **Civet**—perfume from the civet-cat. Apothecaries in Elizabethan times were perfumers as well as the sellers of drugs.

129. **To.........imagination**—So reads the Quarto. Muir compares Marston, "The Fawne", II. i. (ed. Wood, p. 161) : "Sweeten your imaginations with thoughts of—ah why women are the most giddie, uncertaine motions under heaven...onely meere chanceful appetite swayes them."

131. **Mortality**—humanity, that is so very rotten at the bottom.

132. **Piece** – masterpiece ; *Cf.* "Pericles", IV. vi. 118 : "Thou art a piece of virtue." **This great world**—universe.

134. **Squiny**—squint ; look askance ; ogling.

135. **blind......love** – Lear imagines Gloucester to be the blind Cupid, and tells him, 'You may try all your artifices upon me, but they will be least effective, and eventually you will not be able to make me fall in love. "Lear is pondering the grossness of mortality ; for 'blind Cupid' was the sign painted over the doors of brothels."—(Blunden).

136. **Challenge**—Lear's mind goes back to his speech, IV. i. 90. Kittredge suggests that the enemy is blind Cupid, but this is unlikely since he gives the challenge to Gloucester to read and it is Gloucester, he has taken for Cupid.

138. **I would .. report** – If some one had reported to me this meeting of the mad King and my father, I would not have believed it, we should say 'distracted god-father', as Lear stood in that relation to Edgar.

141. **What !......eyes ?** - What ! Do you expect me to red the letter merely with the empty sockets of my eyes?

142. **Are.........me ?** – Is that what you mean ?

144 **In a......purse in a light**—Quibble on 'case' and 'light' : 'Case'=(i) in a wretched plight, and (ii) heavy eye sockets ; 'light'=(i) empty, and (ii) merry.

146. **I see it feelingly** - I discern the way of the world—its tragedies, its diabolical wickedness and its bitter dreadful ironies—and I, in my own person, feel them intimately. *N B*. Pun on 'feelingly'=(i) by my sense of feeling, *viz*. of touch, and (ii) keenly.

147-148. **What ! art......eyes**—What, are you insane, and think that the world can only be seen with eyes, that you speak of feeling it, as though that were but a poor test of perception ?

149. **Simple**—of low state : of common birth ; ordinary.

150. **Handy-dandy**—*i.e.*, take your choice ; the judge and thief cannot be distinguished from each other. It refers to the old game of children : one player held an object, which he changed rapidly from hand to hand and his playmates had to say in which hand it finally remained : handy-dandy, which hand will you have ?

154. **Creature**—human being.

155. **Image**—that which embodies in itself the idea of authority.

156. **A dog's......office**—*i.e.*, anything in official status is obeyed, Montaigne mentions that "there are nations, who receive and admit a Dogge to be their King." (*Essays* : iii. 210.)

157. **Beadle**—A parish officer, authorized to punish the petty offenders, knaves ; parish constable.

159. **Kind**—manner.

160. **The......cozener**—A magistrate, who himself has been guilty of crime of usury, passes sentence on one who has swindled in a petty matter. "Cozener" - swindler ; cheat.

161. **Through...........appear**—The vices, however small,

are easily seen in beggars ; in case of rich, however great, they remain unnoticed.

162. **Robes.........all**—Lear has the judges still in his mind. *Cf.* "Lucrece", 93 : "Hiding base sin in pleats of majesty". Muir quotes from Barclay, "The Mirrour of Good Manners" (ed. 1885, p. 34), the following interesting passage :

> "What difference betweene a great thiefe and a small,
> Forsooth no more but this to speake I dare be bolde,
> The great sitteth on benche in costly furres of pall,
> The small thiefe at barre standeth trembling colde,
> The great thieves are laded with great chaynes of golde,
> The small thiefe with yron chayned from all refuge,
> The small thiefe is judged oft time great is judge."

162-163. **Plate.........breaks**—"Clothe sin in the plate armour of wealth and the stroke of justice, however powerful, recoils harmlessly from it, the only injury done being to itself."

165. **I'll able 'm**—"I take off all legal disabilities which they may have incurred by their crimes."—(Heath). 'Able'—warrant ; authorize ; vouch for.

166. **That**—*i.e.*, piece of information ; an imaginary pardon.

168. **Scurvy**—contemptible ; base ; mean. **Politician**—trickster ; one adopting Machiavelli's policy. *N.B.* The word has not been used in its modern sense ; in Shakespeare it is always used in bad sense.

171. **Matter and impertinency**—sense and nonsense ; relevant and the irrelevant. *N.B.* A good description of the King's ravings with their intermittent flashes of sanity. In the parliamentary (or Pickwickian) sense the word 'impertinent' means 'irrelevant'.

173. **Wilt weep**—are desirous to weep.

175. **We came crying hither**—*Cf.* Montaigne (translation, Florio, i. 107) : "So wept we, and so much did it cost us to enter into this life." Noble compares "Wisdom", vii. 3-5 ; "And whem I was borne, I received the common aire, and fell upon the earth, which is of like nature, crying and weeping at the first as all other doe......For there is no king that had any other beginning of birth." 'Hither'—into the world.

177. **We wawl and cry**—'Wawl'=cry aloud. Cotgrave has : 'Houaller'=To yawle, or cry out aloud. Anders compares Holland's "Pliny," vii, Proem (ed. 1601, p. 152 : cited by Muir) : "Man alone, poore wretch, she (Nature) hath laid all naked upon the bare earth, even on his birthday, to cry and wraule presently from the very first houre that he is borne into this world."

180. **This**—this is ; for this contraction, see Abbott, § 461. **Stage**—where we are required to play our part. *Cf.* "As You Like It", II. vii. 139 :

> "All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players."

Block—the hat or the shape of a hat ; that on which the hat is shaped. Lear, perhaps refers to Gloucester's hat, or his own, which he snatches off, and this, being made of felt, suggests the next remarks. In fact the block is really the wooden shape from which the hat is made. *Cf.* "Much Ado About Nothing," I. 75 :

> "He wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat :
> It ever changes with the next block."

Dr. Somerville ("Madness in Shakespearean Tragedy") suggests a quibble here : (i) the hatter's block *i.e.*, the wooden mould for a hat ; and (ii) the mounting block, the wooden block or the stump of a tree used for mounting a horse ; in every market-town there were such mounting blocks. Lear's mind jumps from the mounting block by his side to the hatter's block.

181-182. **A delicate.........felt**—Malone thus comments ; "This 'delicate stratagem' had actually been put in practice fifty years before Shakespeare was born, as we learn from Lord Herbert's "Life of Henry the Eighth": 'the ladye Margaret...... caused there a juste to be held in an extraordinary manner ; the place being a fore-room raised high from the ground by many steps, and paved with black square stones like marble ; while the horses, to prevent sliding, were shod with felt or flock (the Latin words are 'feltro sive tomento') : after which the ladies danced all night'." 'Delicate'=neat ; ingenious. *Cf.* "Othello," IV. i. 199 : "So delicate with her needle".

182. **I'll put 't in proof**—I will try the experiment.

184. **Kill, kill**—This was formerly the word, given in the English army, when an onset was made and no quarter was to be given to the foes. *Cf.* "The Mirrour for Magistrates" :

> "Our Englishman came boldly forth at night
> Crying St. George Salisbury, kill, kill !"

187. **No rescue** ?—Does no one come to my rescue ? I am taken as a prisoner, and no one is pierced to save me !

187-188. **I am ....fortune** –"born to be the sport of fortune."

N.B. Empson suggests a pun on 'natural' : (i) born ; and (ii) imbecile.

189. **You shall have ransom**—I am quite willing to pay ransom for my liberty.

190. **I am cut to th' brains** – used literally as well as figuratively. Lear is altogether exasperated in his insanity but requires a surgeon, for an imaginary wound in the head. The words of Lear show that he has been in mortal agony and there has been a rush of blood to the brains. "He feels darts of dreadful physical pain in the head, as if his skull were being cleft in twain—one of the most frequent accompaniments of severe mental conflicts being splitting headaches."

—(Dr. Somerville).

191. **No............ ..myself** ?—Will no one help me ? Am I to be left forlorn, to face the captors single-handed.

192. **A man of salt**—*i.e.*, a man of tears. *Cf.* "Hamlet," I. ii. 154 : "the salt of most unrighteous tears" ; and "Coriolanus", V. vi. 93 : Aufidius complains that the hero had given up Rome "for certain drops of salt".

194. **Laying**—for laying. **Bravely**—mark the quibble, (i) courageously, (ii) in smart flamboyant clothes.

195. **Like a smug bridegroom**—'smug'=spick and span. *Cf.* "Antony and Cleopatra", IV. xiv. 100 :

> "...........but I will be
> A bridegroom in my death, and run into't
> As to a lover's bed."

196. **Masters**—fine fellows; used ironically, as well as respectfully, to the context of situation.

198. **There's life in't**—Then there is still hope; "the case is not yet desperate." **And you get it**—if you succeed in your object.

199. **Sa, sa**–Kittredge thus explains: "An old hunting cry to call a hound or to urge the dogs forward in chase of the hare." From Fr. 'ca' ca'! It was used as a rallying cry, or as an interjection of challenge and defiance.

201. **Past........ king**—which in the case of a king can scarcely be described by words.

202-30. **Who.........her to**—Cordelia's character redeems (human) nature, from the curse, brought on it by the iniquitous Goneril and Regan; less probably by Adam and Eve, as some suggest. 'General'=universal.

204. **Gentle**—noble.

205. **Toward**—impending; in preparation.

206. **Vulgar**—in everybody's mouth; as everybody hears of it, there should be a grain of truth in it. *Cf.* "Hamlet". I. ii. 99.

> "..................As common
> As any the most vulgar thing to sense."

207. **By your favour**—if I am pardoned for asking that.

209. **Speedy foot**—advancing rapidly.

209-210. **The main.........thought**—We expect any hour now, to descry the main body.

211. **On special cause**—the specific purpose of taking care of her father.

213-215. **You ....please!**—Gloucester resolves to bear his affliction with fortitude, finding Lear's misfortune to be greater than his own.

214. **Worser spirit**—evil angel; evil side of my nature; the spirit to rebel against your wills.

217. **Tame**—submissive; yielding.

218. **By the........sorrows**—taught by the personal heart-felt griefs, which I have experienced.

219. **Pregnant to good pity**—"quick to conceive pity for others : 'pregnant,=susceptible ; disposed ; ready.

220. **Biding**—resting place ; abode ; habitation.

221-222. **The bounty.........boot** !—may Heaven profusely shower its good fortune and blessing. **To boot, and boot**—to reward you besides my thanks. "By the repetition Gloucester wishes to convey both meanings, 'to boot'—in addition (to my thanks), and (the bounty of Heaven) be your help."—(Herford), 'Boot' is from old English, 'bot'=profit, advantage. **Proclaimed prize**—one who has been denounced as a traitor, and on whose head a price is laid.

225. **Briefly thyself remember**—quickly call to your mind the past since and ask the Heaven for pardoning you. **Out**—out of scabbard ; unsheathed.

226. **Friendly**—presumably because Gloucester himself was eagerly desirous of dying.

229. **Strength enough**—so as to speedily despatch him.

228. **Publish'd traitor**—one publicly proclaimed as a traitor.

229-230. **Lest.........thee**—lest the same misfortune befall you, *i.e.*, die by my sword. **Let go**—release.

231-241. **Chill not.........foins**—"Conventional stage dialect 'approximating to the Somersetshire', but used for variety of other counties. It is identical with the Devonshire dialect in 'The London Prodigal' (1605), performed by Shakespeare's Company." (Muir) Steevens suggests : "When our ancient writers introduce a rustic, they commonly allot him this Somersetshire dialect."

231. **Chill not**—Inch will not = I will not.

N.B. The contractions 'cham', 'chas', 'chil', for 'icham', 'ich was', 'ich will', are mentioned by Gill, who was born the same year as Shakespeare, as a southern pronunciation ; 'z'='s', 'v'='f'.

233. **Go your gait**—go your own way. **Volk**—folk ; 'v' for 'f'.

234. **An Chud**—If I could. **Bin.........life**—if I am going to be killed by mere swagger or bluster.

236. **Che vor ye**—I warn you ; Craig quotes from "The

London Prodigal", V. i. 349 : "Well, che vor ye, he is changed"; the phrase here may mean : "I warrant you." **Ice**—I shall.

236-237. **Whether your............harder**—which is harder, whether your head or my cudgel. 'Ballow'=cudgel.

239. **Dunghill**—ill-bred ; dunghill born ; base ; "scum of the earth."

240. **Chill ....teeth**—perhaps rendered by the expressive Americanism, "I'll knock sparks out of you", easily knock you down.

241. **Foins**—thrusts. *Cf.* "Much Ado About Nothing", V. i. 84 : "Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence."

243. **If ever.........thrive**—as you are hopeful of your prosperity.

244. **Letters**—only one letter, *i.e.*, of Goneril. **About me**—*i.e.*, on my person.

246. **Upon the English Party**—in the midst of the ranks of British army.

249. **As......Mistress**—as readily willing to serve his mistress, in all her iniquitous aspects. 'Duteous'=obsequious ; obedient.

250. **Would desire**—could possibly desire.

253. **May be my friends**—may be of considerable use to me.

254. **Death's-man**—executioner. "Edgar is sorry that he anticipated the hangman."—(Schmidt).

255. **Leave, gentle wax**—with your permission. *Cf.*

> "Cymbeline", II. ii. 35 : "Good wax, thy leave."
> "Twelfth Night", II. v. 103 : "By your leave, wax."

256. **Rip their hearts**—dissect their hearts so as to know the contents thereof.

257. **Their......lawful**—To rip up their papers would be less offensive.

259. **If you will want not**—if you do not lack determination.

260. **Time......offer'd**—The opportunities of time and place will offer themselves plentifully.

260-261. **There is... ....conqueror**—If the opportunity is not made use of in dispensing with his life, which it would be pretty easy in the midst of these commotions, our dreams shall be shattered.

263. **For your labour**—as a reward for your troubles.

265. **Servant**—lover ; a term of gallantry, frequently used of both the sexes, in this sense.

267. **O......will**—O unconfined range of woman's lust. "So wide-reaching (is a woman's will), that its workings cannot be discovered"—(Wright). "Woman's will has no distinguishable bounds or assignable limits ; there is no telling what she will do or where she will stop."—(Hudson). 'Indistinguish'd =indefinable ; beyond the range of sight.

269. **Sands**—Perrett points out that it is only Gloucester, who thinks they are on the beach.

270. **Rake up**—burn and "cover up as the embers are covered with ashes so that the fire will keep in."

270-271. **The post......—lechers**—the obnoxious messenger of a murderous adulteress. 'Unsanctified' refers "to his lack of burial in consecrated ground."

271. **The mature time**—when the time is ripe ; opportune moment.

272. **Ungracious**—shamefully wicked ; scandalous.

273. **Death-practis'd**—whose death has been plotted.

274. **That......tell**—That I can tell him of the villainous errand on which you are employed and how you ended in a fiasco, by being slain by me.

275-277. **How stiff......sorrows !**—How perversely adamant is my wretched faculty of reason that it does not allow me to stoop in madness, like the king, under the heavy weight of terribe vows, but compels me to retain a vivid sense of them ! **Stiff**—lobstinately unbending. **Vile sense**—Empson explains that Gloucester's sense is vile because it seems disloyal to outlast Lear's, but that 'vile sense' is commonly used for the senses as a source of joy, so that he might be regretting his past sensual indulgences and lustful levity. Muir finds this interpretation ingenious, and suggests that Gloucester's senses

are vile because of his being fully conscious of his sorrows, without giving him the relief of insanity.

276. **Ingenious**—conscious ; intelligent. *Cf.* "Hamlet", V. i. 271 :

> "Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
> Deprived thee of."

277. **Distract**—mad ; distracted.

275. **Wrong imaginations**—illusions ; hallucinations ; ideas removed from reality.

282. **Bestow**—lodge ; house ; obtain shelter and care for. **Friend**—We have yet to know, how and when fugitive Bedlam beggar Tom got in touch with a friend.

ACT IV : SCENE VII

Analysis. In a tent in the French camp, Lear is lying on bed, the Doctor, Cordelia, Kent, Gentleman and other attendants are present. Soft music is playing. The scene opens with a tribute from Cordelia to Kent's immeasurable goodness, to compensate which she says :

> "My life will be too short,
> And every measure fail me."

Kent replies that he considers himself over-paid, as his services are acknowledged. At this Cordelia wants him to "be better suited," as the clothes that he wears are the memorial of the "worser hours." Kent tells her that he would not like to let anybody recognize him for that might interfere with his fixed design, and that she should be kind enough to so appear as not to recognize him, until the ripe moment comes for doing so. Cordelia accepts whatever Kent desires. Cordelia gives vent to her pathetic feelings for her father. She wants her lips to be medicine so as to bring her father the restoration of his senses, and

> "... . ...let this kiss
> Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
> Have in thy reverence made."

The King awakes and imagines *Cordelia* to be an angel from the heaven, while he himself being doomed to the torments of the hell. He is greatly improved, but not sane. At last he recognizes Cordelia, and pathetically utters :

"If you have poison for me, I will drink it." He tells her that her sisters were thoroughly unjust to him ; she was innocent and had the cause for not loving him and be angry at him. At this Cordelia declares : "No cause, no cause" ; which shows that she in herself embodies the affection for her father the affection to express which the words would be but poor and inadequate. The old man craves for her company and cries, "Pray you how, forget and forgive ; I am old and foolish."

In this scene, the long postponed meeting between Lear and Cordelia takes place and hence, it is rightly termed as a 'Reconciliation Scene.' Lear borders on sanity but in regaining his reason, becomes helpless : "I fear I am not in my perfect mind." Cordelia anxiously waits for the recognition, and when he does, she cries in joy and love and thankfulness : 'So I am, I am." Hazlitt comments here : "The 'so I am' of Cordelia gushes from her heart like a torrent of tears, relieving it of a weight of love and of supposed ingratitude which had pressed upon it for years." That in Cordelia's fumbling is revealed her own as well as the dramatist's eloquence, is paradoxically true. A critic says aptly of this scene :

"Look at the scene from any point of view: psychological insight ; spiritual vision ; intensity of pathos ; unerring rightness of touch ; the transmutation of simple words into the magic of sheer beauty, the poetry of human heart and the economy of style ; and the scene you will say is one of the greatest that Shakespeare ever penned."

The virtues of forgiveness and repentance, through which Shakespeare exalts his characters, are the loftiest words in his dictionary of ethics.

Notes

S.D. **Soft music playing**—The belief in the efficacy of music in the treatment of the insane is very old, though this influence is not always beneficial. In pathetic scene, the music is certainly an effective accompaniment on the stage. *Cf.* "Richard II", V. v. 61-63 :

> "This music mads me : let it sound no more ;
> For though it hath holp madmen to their wits,
> In me, it seems, it will make wise men mad."

Elsewhere Shakespeare says :

"In sweet music is such art
Killing cares and griefs of heart
Fall asleep or hearing die."

2. **To match**—adequately reward ; or compensate.

3. **Every measure fail me**—every act of gratitude will fail but too short. your goodness being immeasurable. Muir cites from "Leir", 2655-56, by way of comparison :

"Yet all I can, I were ne'er so much
Were not sufficient, thy true loue is such."

4. **To be............o'er-paid**—That my services are acceptable to you makes me feel over-paid.

5-6. **All my............but so**—All the reports I have sent you in regard to the events, ever since you went to France, coincide with the bare truth, there being neither exaggeration, nore xtenuation. **Go with**—coincide. **Modest**—moderate. **Clipp'd**—inaccurate because of omission ; curtailed. **So**—*i.e.*, the events are as they have been described by me.

6. **Suited**—dressed ; clothed.

7. **Weeds**—clothes ; garments ; from the Anglo-Saxon "woed', 'woede'=a garment. *Cf.* "Coriolanus", II. iii. 161 :

"With a proud heart he wore his humble weeds.

Memories—memorials ; reminders ; remembrances. *Cf.* "Coriolanus", V. i. 17 :

"A pair of tribunes that have rack'd for Rome,
To make coals,—a noble memory !

9. **Yet... .....intent**—To be known soon would interfere in the execution of the plan of action I have fixed upon. 'Shorten'=interferes.

10-11. **My boon.........meet**—Grant this favour that you so appear as not to recognize me until the opportune moment comes when it would be proper for me to reveal my identity.

15. **Abused**—One that has been so much more cruelly treated.

16. **Th' untuned.........senses**—The metaphor seems to be derived from the tightening of the strings of a musical

instrument, *e.g.*, of violin. **Wind up**—*i.e.*, like the strings of an instrument, to the proper pitch so that they will not be 'untuned and jarring'. *Cf.* "Hamlet", III. i 166 : "Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh."

17. **Child-changed** changed by the cruel treatment of his children ; or less probably, as some editors explain, changed to a child, being brought to dotage. Cleanth Brooks is of the opinion that the ambiguity is but deliberate. **So......majesty** —May your Majesty be pleased to give us permission!

19-20. **Be govern'd.........will** - I leave it to you to decide which is the proper moment for awaking him and hence in this matter do as your wishes dictate you to, *i.e.*, in conformity with them.

24. **Of his temperance**—of his being calm after a prolonged sleep ; 'temperance'=calmness ; soundness of mind ; normality ; self-restraint. *Cf.* "Hamlet", III. ii. 8: "...for in the very torrent, tempest, and, as I may say, whirlwind of your passion, you must acquire and beget a temperance that may give it smoothness."

25. **Louder the music there**—Let music be louder there.

N.B. Capell suggests that this music had been Lear's composure and (together with his composure) his cure and now it is called to by the Doctor for the purpose of waking him, by such strains as were proper, rising gradually . ...of just and of good effect on the scene.

26-27. **Restoration......lips**—May my lips be medicine to your recovery of senses, by curing your disorder. "Restoration is no more than recovery personified."—(Steevens).

"She invokes the goddess of health, Hygieia under the name of 'Restoration' to make her the minister of the rites, in this holy office of recovering her father's lost senses."—(Warburton).

29. **Have.......made**—have made in one so reverence-worthy as you.

30. **Had you**—even if you had, etc. **White flakes**—snowy locks.

31. **Challenge**—claim as due. *Cf.* "Othello", I. iii. 188:

"So much duty as my mother show'd to you.........
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor my Lord."

33. **Dread-bolted**—furnished with terrible bolt. *Cf.*" Julius Caesar", I. iii. 49 : "Thunder-Stone", the thunder bolt of the Jove (cited by Deighton).

Cross lightening—forked lightening *Cf.* "Julius Caesar", I. iii. 50 :

"The cross blue lightning".

'Cross=darting; zigzag. **Poor perdu**—'perdu' seems here not to be derived from the French 'enfant perdu' (=a soldier of a forlorn hope or storming party), but from 'sentinelle perdue' =sentry placed in a very advanced and perilous position. *Cf.* Beaumont and Fletcher : The little French Lawyer—

"I am set here like a perdu,
To watch a fellow that wronged my mistress."

36. **With this thin helm**—having no other protection, except his scanty locks.

38. **Against**—before ; opposite to.

39. **To hovel thee**--to shelter yourself in a hovel. *Cf.* 'Cabin', used as a verb in "Titus Andronicus", IV. ii. 179 :

"And cabin in a cave."

Rogues—vagabonds. *N.B.* Not used in the modern sense, but in that of 'vagrants'; "vagabonds, wandering mendicants," —(Craig). *Cf.* Cotgrave, "French Dictionary"; "Roder"=to roam ; wander ; vagalondize it ; rogue abroad : run up and down.

40. **Short**—chopped out; cut short for litter; "scanty, insufficient ; broken up into short lengths by constant use as bedding"—(Kittredge).

41. **Wonder**—*i.e.*, wonderful, just as in Bacon, frequently, we find 'reason' for 'reasonable'. Wright quotes from Chaucer, "Knight's Tale", 2075 (ed. Tyrwhitt) :

"Ther saw I many another wonder storie."

42. **Had .... all**—had not ended altogether. *Cf.* "Timon of Athens", I. i. 139 :

"I will choose
Mine heir forth the beggars of the world,
And disposses her all",

and "Cymbeline", V. v. 32 :

> "her life, which, being cruel to the world, concluded most cruel to herself."

46. **Bliss**—in heaven.

46–48. **I am.......... lead**—I am doomed to the torments of the hell, for my sins, so that the tears of repentance, I shed for them, singe my cheeks like a molten lead.

47. **Wheel of fire**—Lear thinks himself to be in hell. Muir refers to H. W. Crundell, who suggests that the torment of the wheel of fire, although not scriptural, is traditional in the mediaeval lengends and visions of Hell and Purgatory. **That**—so that ; for omission of 'so', see Abbott, § 283.

50. **Far wide**—*i.e.*, astray ; wandering ; his wits are still riotous. *Cf.* "Much Ado About Nothing", IV. i. 63 : "Is my Lord well, that he doth speak so wide?"

52. **Fair daylight ?**—Am I in a dreamland or really awake and in the enjoyment of the daylight ?

53. **Abus'd**—deluded by mind and senses ; he thinks the very sight of Cordelia must be a hallucination.

"Strangely imposed upon by circumstances ; in a strange mist of uncertainty."—(Johnson). *Cf.* "Hamlet", II. ii. 579 : "Abuses me to damn me."

53-54. **I should...........thus**—"This is not to be taken as indulgence in self-pity, but as an objective statement to guide the audience in their emotional reactions."—(Muir).

58. **Benediction**—blessing. *N.B.* Hudson thus comments : "A parent's curse was a dreadful thing among our.............. ancestors and so Cordelia longs first of all to have her father revoke the curse he pronounced upon her in the opening of the play. She had not learned to act as if 'a man were author of himself, and knew no other kin'."

59. **You must not kneel**—This incident seems to be borrowed from the old play of "King Leir", but it should be borne in mind that it was Shakespeare and Shakespeare only who, like an alchemist, by his magic touch could brilliantly transmute the base metal into gold.

60. **Fond**—foolish ; in his dotage, enfeebled both physically and mentally.

Not ....less—the contradiction of 'upward' may be marked ; which shows his mind has still not attained that clarity, and also suffers from that disorder which compels him to retain a nonsensical sequence of ideas.

65. **Mainly**—entirely ; thoroughly ; perfectly.

66. **Skill**—apprehension ; sense.

67. **Remembers . ...garments**—as they have been changed earlier ; see lines 20 - 22. **Nor I know not**—the double negative is for the sake of emphasis.

69-70. **Lady.........Cordelia**—"Contrast between these two words indicates Lear's return to sanity" ; but whether this sanity is sustained ?

70. **And so I am, I am**—Hudson thus comments : "The 'so I am' of Cordelia gushes from her heart like a torrent of tears relieving it of a weight of love and of supposed ingratitude which had pressed upon it for years."

"All Cordelia is poured forth in that infinite
'I am' of fulfilled love."—(Ruskin).

Cordelia in her reticence and fumbling its much more eloquent, that is the paradox of her very character.

75. **Some cause**—for being angry and not loving him.

77. **Abuse**—deceive.

78. **Rage** - frenzy ; delirium.

79. **Kill'd**—destroyed ; quelled.

80. **To make.........lost**—To rouse the consciousness of the past in his mind by relating to him the events of his interval of insanity. **Even o'er**—Smooth over, render what had passed unbroken in his recollection. The sense is the same whether it is taken as an adjective or as a verb, but it seems preferable to consider it as a verb. The danger consisted rather in allowing Lear's mind to exert itself in recalling the past than in telling him what had happened." Dr. Schmidt explains, 'to make even o'er' 'to give a full insight into, a clear perception of.' Schmidt, however, says that 'to even' as a verb, equivalent to 'smooth' is not to be found in Shakespeare. For 'even' as an adjective meaning 'smooth', *cf.* "As you Like It", V. iv. 25 : "From hence I go to make these doubts all even". Craig takes 'even'

in the sense of "to score up to give full information about—a metaphor derived from the keeping of accounts. *Cf.* "Macbeth", V. viii. 62:

> "We shall not spend a large expense of time,
> Before we reckon with your several loves,
> And make us even with you."

82. **Till settling**—till his mind becomes more calm ; till his mind is more composed. *Cf.* "Winter's Tale", IV. iv. 481 : "Then till the fury of his highness settle, come not before him."

83. **Walk**—withdraw ; retire. *Cf.* "Much Ado About Nothing", II. iii. 218 : "My Lord, will you walk ? dinner is ready."

84—95. **Holds it true......you well, sir**—The Quarto gives these lines ; whereas the Folios omit them, probably because they are unnecessary to the action and give a flat conclusion to the scene as well.

85. **Holds it true**. Is it a fact ? *Cf.* "Timon of Athens", V. i. 4 : "Does the rumour hold for true ?"

88. **Conductor of his people**—the leader or the general of the forces.

92. **Report is changeable**—rumours are subject to change. **To look about**—to be vigilant in what we do.

94. **Arbitrement**—decisive encounter ; decision. *Cf.* "Twelfth Night", III. iv. 286: "I know the knight is incensed against you even to a mortal arbitrement".

96-97. My **point..............fought**—The end and object of my life will be attained or lost according as this day's battle is own or lost. 'Point and period'=my life's end and object ; the full-stop at the end of my life's sentence ; "throughly"= thoroughly.

ACT V : SCENE I

Analysis. The scene takes us to the British camp near Dover, on the eve of the battle. Edmund enters with a haughty demeanour, as he seems to have occupied the place of dead Cornwall. Being conscious of his *de facto* leadership of the English forces, he is even hyper-critical of the Duke of Albany, whom he blames for being "full of alteration and self-reproving". Regan considers that by loving and marrying Edmund, she would be but conferring upon him a great honour.

She asks Edmund to tell her the truth, even though it be unpalatable to her, whether he was in love with her sister Goneril. Edmund replies that he is but in an "honour'd love". Regan would never iike him to be familiar with her, this being beyond the power of her sufferance. Edmund assures her that she need not be doubtful of him. At this point Goneril, with her husband, enters. Goneril would better lose the battle but would not bear herself being estranged from Edmund. Albany enters into the conflict and does so only from the motives of patriotism. He says : "Where I could not be honest, I never yet was valiant."

What seems important to him is the invasion of the King of France, not that he emboldens the King as well as others who have just reasons for deep frustration, inducing them to rise in arms against their rule. Goneril suggests that they should set aside "these domestic and particular broils" and "combine together 'gainst the enemy." Albany finds it worthwhile that at such an emergency, they should be advised by "th' ancient of war".

Goneril and Regan are terribly jealous of each other. Regan does not like that Goneril may find leisure for indulging in conservation with Edmund, which may be fatal for her own love for him. Edgar enters and gives Goneril's traitorous letter to her husband, the Duke of Albany, asking in return to be allowed to produce a champion to avouch the truth of the letter, should the British win in the battle. Edmund re-enters and states the facts, which he has obtained by a meticulous reconnoitring, about the position of the enemy, hovering over them, and warns Albany to be ready to meet the emergency. The Duke agrees, "We will greet the time." Edmund, in his soliloquy, finds himself kept on tenter-hooks of love—"Which of them shall I take, Both ? one ? or neither ?" In case he marries the widow Regan, it would exasperate and drive Goneril mad. Then he thinks of making use of the Duke's support in the battle, "which being done," Goneril would get rid of her husband and thereafter he would marry her. At the same time he resolves that in spite of Albany's "mercy, which he intends to Lear and to Cordelia" the two (Lear and Cordelia) shall die, should the battle go against them. It may be marked that Edmund's decision is motivated by power and ambition and hence his

choice for Goneril. The forces of enemies work, now as Albany has the letter, which Goneril wrote to Edmund, and which shows the full extent of danger to Duke's own life.

Notes

If .... hold—whether he adheres to his original plan, *viz.*, of fighting.

2-3. **Or whether...... course**—or whether something in the meanwhile has happened, so as to induce him to think the hange of course advisable. 'Alteration'=vacillation ; way-ward.

4. **Self-reproving** - conscientious scruples, the tendency to blame himself for every step that he has taken. **Constant pleasure**—fixed design ; settled determination : "His settled resolution"-(Johnson). *Cf.* I. i. 43 : "We have this hour a constant will to publish.

5. **Man**—servant *i.e.*, Oswald. **Miscarried**—met with some fatal accident ; perished. *Cf.* "Henry V", IV. i. 155 : "If a sone......miscarry upon the sea."

6. **Doubted**—feared, because of his being so late in returning.

7. **The goodness......you**—the honour I intend to confer upon you by marrying you.

8. **But then**—*i.e.*, even if the truth be unpalatable to me.

9. **Honour'd love** - in honourable love, "as far as I may do so consistently with honour."

11. **Forfended**—forbidden, "Goneril's bed is forbidden by the commandment against adultery." *Cf.* "Othello" 'V. ii. 32 :

"No, heavens forfend !
I would not kill thy soul.

Abuses—deceives.

12. **Doubtful**—fearful ; apprehensive. **Conjunct**—united, as lover, "closely united."

13. **Bosom'd with her**—embraced her ; "admitted to her confidence". *Cf.* T. Heywood, "The Silver Age", II. i. **As far as we call hers**—not only 'bosom'd', but in the fullest sense of the word "in anything that can be said to belong to her to the utmost extent."—(Tovey).

15-16. **I never.........with her**—that you are so closely familiar with her shall not be endured by me.

"I shall never suffer he to be so intimate with you."
—(Delius).

16. **Fear me not**—Don't be doubtful about my being too intimate with her. *Cf.* "Henry IV. i. 24 :

"He was much fear'd by his physicians."

17. **She......husband !**—see, here does she come accompanied by her husband.

19. **Loosen**—loosen the tie between ; alienate Edmund from me.

19. **Be-met**—met ; the prefix here does not carry any significance. Abbott, § 438, says : "in participles, 'be' like other prefixes, is often redundant, and seems to indicate and unconscious want of some substitute for the old participle prefix."

22-23. **With others......out**—with others who are deeply frustrated because of the harshness of our rule. 'Rigour'=acrimony ; harshness ; 'cry out'=complain loudly.

23—28. Quarto gives these lines, whereas the Folios omit them. They in a way explain the position of Albany in the matter. "The lines seem to be a kind of apology and explanation, showing that Albany does not wish to appear associate of Goneril and Regan in their conduct towards Lear and defining his (Albany's) position in the whole affair.. Note that the line serve - perhaps were intended to by Shakespeare —to reconcile the audience to the invidious part which circumstances force the moderate Albany to play."—(Verity).

23-24 **Where........valiant**—I can never fight bravely, the moment I feel that I am not acting an honourable part. **Where** —in case where.

24. **For**—as for.

25—27. **It touches......oppose**—It deeply concerns us only as the King of France invades our country not because he brings fresh strength to the cause of the King (Lear) and others whom just and heavy grievances have provoked to be rebellious.

26. **Bolds**—emboldens. Wright suggests that 'bold' is here synonym of 'comfort'. For other instances of verbs formed from adjectives, see Abbott, § 240, *Cf.* Du Bartas, "The

Historie of Judith" (Translation, Hudson ed. 1611) Bk, I, p. 12;

> "I thanke the Lord, who of his grace
> Conioynes no lesse our wils, then bolds our hearts."

With others—*i.e.*, those besides the King.

27. **Heavy causes**—weighty reasons : heavy grievances.

28. **Sir......nobly**—intended to be ironical on Edmund's part, as he does not mean what he says. **Why......reason'd**—of what use is all this discussion ?

30. **Particular broils**—private dissensions and quarrels. *N.B.* So reads the Folio, the Quarto reads 'doore particulars'. Steevens interprets the Quarto reading "particulars at our very doors", but Malone suspects that 'dore' is a misprint for 'dear' (spelt 'dere' presumably), the phrase according to him means 'intimate details', rather than "important quarrels", the latter being Malone's interpretation. *Cf.* "Othello", I. iii. 55 :

> "My particular grief
> Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature."

31. **Are......here**—are not the matters, with which we are concerned at the moment.

32. **Th' ancient of war**—experienced warriors ; "brass hats" ; "the veterans who are skilled in the art of war."

33. **I shall**—for the use of 'shall' with the 1st person, see Abbott, § 818. **Presently**—at once.

36. **Convenient**—befitting ; Regan does not like Goneril to be left alone with Edmund and consequently proposes to keep a vigilant watch of the latter's dealings with Edmund.

37. **O, ho.........go**—Muir explains thus : "This may mean : "You want to keep me under your eye so as to observe my relation with Edmund ;" or "You don't want me to attend the council of war, where I shall be close to Edmund". If Regan was herself going to attend the council, we must assume that she did not wish to leave Goneril behind with Edmund even for a moment. 'I know the riddle'='I see through your veiled purpose.'

31 - 39. *Stage Directions* and : **Let's then......I'll overtake you**—Bradley comprehensively discusses these : "It would appear from this that all the leading persons are to go to a Council of War with the ancient (plural) in Albany's tent ; and

they are going out, followed by their armies when Edgar comes in. Why in the world, then, should Goneril propose (as she apparently does) to absent herself from the Council; and why, still more should Regan object to her doing so ? This is a question which always perplexed me, and I could not believe in the only answers I ever found suggested, *viz.*, that Regan wanted to keep Edmund and Goneril together in order that she might observe them (Moberly, quoted by Furness) or that she could not bear to lose sight of Goneril for fear Goneril should effect a meeting with Edmund after the Council. (Delius if I understand him).

"But I find in Koppel what seems to be the solution. He points out that the modern stage-directions are wrong. For the modern direction 'As they are going out, enter Edgar, disguised,' the Folios read 'Exeunt both the armies. Enter Edgar.' For 'Exeunt all but Albany and Edgar', the Ff. have nothing, but Quarto I has 'exeunt' after 'word'. For the first direction Koppel would read, 'Exeunt Regan, Goneril, Gentleman and Soldiers' : for second he would read, after 'overtake you,' 'Exit Edmund.' This makes all clear. Albany proposes a Council of War. Edmund assents and says he will come at once to Albany's tent for the purpose. The Council of War consists of Albany, Edmund and the ancients of war. Regan accordingly is going away with her soldiers ; but she observes that Goneril shows no sign of moving with her soldiers ; and she at once suspects that Goneril means to attend the Council in order to be with Edmund. Full of jealousy she invites Goneril to go with her. Goneril refuses, but then seeing Regan's motive, contemptuously and ironically consents (I doubt if 'O, ho, I know the riddle' should be 'aside', as in modern editions, following Capell). Accordingly the two sisters go out, followed by their soldiers, and Edmund and Albany are just going out, in a different direction, to Albany's tent, when Edgar enters. His words cause Albany to stay : Albany says to Edmund, as Edmund leaves, " 'I'll overtake you' ; and then, turning to Edgar, bids him 'speak'."

38. **Had speech**—any time condescended to speak.

39. **Overtake you**—catch you, rejoin you.

40. **Ope**—open. *Cf.* "Tempest", I. ii, 37 :

"The very minute bids thee ope thine ear."

44. **Avouched**—formally stated ; maintained, asserted as a fact.

44—46. **If you......ceases**—in case you loss the battle, you will have snapped all links with the affairs of the world and the vicious plots against you, will, of necessity, come to an end.

44. **Miscarry**—presumably a euphemism for 'be killed' ; lose the battle, and perish.

46. **Machination ceases**—"All designs against your life will have an end."—(Johnson). **Fortune love you**—may you be the favourite of Fortune !

Cf. "Coriolanus", I. v. 21-22 : "Now, the fair goddess Fortune, Fall deep in love with thee !"

47. **Forbid**—forbidden to stay while you go through the letter.

50. **O'erlook**—*i.e.*, read ; look over ; peruse.

51. **Powers**—troops.

52. **Guess**—estimate.

53. **By diligent discovery**—obtained by a meticulous reconnoitring *i.e.*, by vigilantly surveying through the military operations. **But your haste** - the haste which you should make.

54. **Is now urged on you**—As others have done their part, now you ought to hurry up ; you have not even a minute to lose in waiting or brooding over the matters. **We will greet the time**—We shall wait no more and readily meet the emergency, very much like one anxious to meet the guest. "Be ready to meet the occasion."

56. **Jealous**—mutually suspicious. *Cf.* "Julius Caesar" I. ii. 71 : "And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus." Cotgrave, "French Dictionary", gives : jaloux : m. ouse ; f. jealous ; mistrustful, suspicious.' In Lowland Scotch, 'to jalouse' is 'to suspect'. **Stung**—the sharp-pointed weapon of some animals ; the thrust of a sting into the flesh ; anything that cause acute pain.

57. **Adder**—the popular English name for viper ; venomous snake.

60. **Exasperates**—very much annoy, irritates in a high degree. From Latin 'ex'=intend', 'asperare'='to make rough.'

61-62. **And hardly......alive**—There will be but little hope of my carrying out my game victoriously so long as her husband is alive.

61. **Carry out my side**—when my game : succeed in my plan or ambition. "Fulfil my side of the bargain with Goneril—satisfy her lust in return for advancement."—(Muir).

The metaphor seems to be derived from the game of cards, as suggested by Monck Mason, who cites from Massinger's "Great Duke of Florence", IV. ii :

> "If I hold your cards, I shall pull down the side ;
> I am not good at the game."

63. **Countenance**—support ; authority.

65. **Taking off**—killing ; Edmund's villainy knows no end ; he having exploited Goneril's love for his villainous purpose, would make her suffer the terrible consequences of the murder.

68. **Shall**—*i.e.*, they shall.

67-68. **The battle .....pardon**—When the battle will be over, and they (Lear and Cordelia) would be in our power, it would be rather impossible for them to receive his (Albany's) pardon. Abbot, § 411, says that this is a confusion of constructions between (i) 'let the battle be done', and (ii) they, 'and the battle being done, they,' etc.

68-69. **For my .....debate**—Muir thus explains, "I must take active steps to maintain my position, not merely think about it. Edmund hopes that Goneril will kill Albany, and kill, or be killed by, Regan, leaving him free to marry the survivor. The survival of Lear and Cordelia would prejudice his chances of becoming king of the united kingdom."

68. **For my state**—as for my state ; "for my state makes it incumbent on me", or "as for my state it is incumbent on me.'—(Wright).

69. **Stands on me**—greatly concerns me ; demands from me. *Cf.* "Hamlet", V. ii. 63-4 :

> "Does it not, think'st thee, stand me now upon—
> He that hath kill'd my king, and stained my mother."

ACT V : SCENE II

Analysis. Edgar places his father under the shadow of a tree that might be a "good host" to him. He further asks him to "pray that right may thrive," Presently he returns with the tidings that King Lear has lost and he, and his daughter, both have been arrested, and hence Edgar wants to hurry his father away. Gloucester seems to be extremely weary with life and desires to breathe his last—"a man may rot even here." Edgar warns him that he should not be obsessed by such sinister thoughts of suicide, and like a philosopher he utters in a stoical vein : "Men must endure. Their going hence, even as their coming hither." Gloucester seems to be convinced and the two retire from the stage.

This scene, though small, is quite significant, as it gives a turning point to the action. The long expected battle at length takes place. That this scene is brief and meagre in the extreme, is something contrary to Shakespeare's usual practice in dealing with battle scene. Spedding propounds a theory asserting that the usually accepted division into Acts and Scene is wrong. He suggests the Act IV should really end at line 4 of this scene, while Act V should begin from the next line, and that the battle should be considered as taking place in between these Acts. This alteration, proposed by Spedding can be objected in three ways : (i) It is not the battle itself but the result, that is of great significance, and the play was already long enough and hence no scope as such for prolongation either by battle scenes or such like episodes ; (ii) The sympathy of the audience is entirely on the side of the army which patriotism and the denouement designed by the playwright, both required to be defeated ; and (iii) Spedding's suggestion would make Act IV extremely long, and the briefness of this scene may be rather considered an excellent example of dramatic economy, since the battle is not important. In "Macbeth," and "Antony and Cleopatra" the battles are important, obviously because the heroes of both plays are warriors.

Bradley discusses Spedding's view in further details : "I found my impression of the extraordinary ineffectiveness of this battle, confirmed by a paper of James Spedding ('New Shakespeare Society Transactions', 1877, on Furness's 'King Lear,' p. 312. f.), but his opinion that this is the one technical

defect in King Lear seems certainy incorret......To make Spedding's view quite clear, I may remind the reader that in the preceding scene the two British armies, that of Edmnnd and Regan and that of Albany and Goneril have entered with drum and colours, and have departed......The battle it will be seen, is represented only by military music within the tiring-house which formed the back of the stage. 'The scene', says Spedding, 'does not change ; but alarums are heard, and afterwards a 'retreat', and on the same field over which that great army has this moment passed, 'fresh and full of hope' re-appears, with tidings that all is lost, the same man who last left the stage to follow and fight in it.* That Shakespeare meant the scene to stand thus, no one who has the true faith will believe.''

Bradley's objections to Spedding's viewpoint are as follows : ("Shakespearean Tragedy", p. 390, *ed.* 1958, Macmillan.)

(i) The pause at the end of present fourth Act is far from 'faulty" as Spedding alleges to be : that Act ends with the most melting scene Shakespeare ever wrote ; and a pause after it, and before the business of the battle, was perfectly right.

(ii) The fourth Act is already much longer than the fifth (about 14 columns of the Globe edition against about the eight and a half), and Spedding's change would give the fourth nearly 16 columns and the fifth less than 7.

(iii) Spedding's proposal requires a much greater alteration in the existing text than he supposed. It does not simply shift the division of the two Acts, it requires the disappearance and the re-entrance of the blind Gloucester. Gloucester, as the text stands, is alone on the stage while the battle is being fought at a distance, and the reference to the tree shows that he was on the main or lower stage. The main stage had no front curtain ; and therefore, if Act IV is to end where Spedding wished it to end, Gloucester must go off unaided at its

*Where did Spedding find this ? I find no trace of it, and surely Edgar would not have risked his life in the battle, when, he had, in case of defeat, to appear and fight Edmund. He does not appear 'armed', according to the Folio, till V. iii. 117.

close, and come on again unaided for Act V. And this means that the whole arrangement of the present Act V, scene ii, must be changed. If Spedding had been aware of this, it is not likely that he would have broached his theory.

(iv) It is curious that he does not allude to the one circumstance which throws some little suspicion on the existing text. I mean the contradiction between Edgar's statement that, if ever he returns to his father again, he will bring him comfort, and the fact that immediately afterwards he returns to bring him discomfort. It is possible to explain this psychologically, of course, but the passage is not one in which we should expect psychological subtlety.

Notes

1. **Father**—Here Edgar may possibly be using the term in its real sense, but in the fifth line again he uses "old man."

1-2. **Take the.........host**—Let the shelter of this tree accord a warm welcome to you ; try to feel comforted in the shelter of this tree ; 'good host'=shelter.

8. **A man may......here**—the spot is good enough for me to breathe my last.

9. **Ill thoughts**—sinister thoughts, those of committing suicide.

9-10. **Men must......hither**—Both death and birth, being equally natural, men should view them both in the calm light of reason.

11. **Ripeness is all**—What is important is inner spiritual readiness for death. *N.B.* The dramatist reveals the same sentiment in "Hamlet", V. ii. 231-34 : "If it be now, 'tis not to come ; if it be not come, it will be now ; if it be not now, yet it will come, the readiness is all". *Cf.* Montaigne (Florio's Trans. V, ii) : "There is no more inconvenience to fear death than to endure it. What matter when it cometh since it is

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*Spedding supposed that there was a front curtain and this idea, coming down from Malone and Collier, is still found in English works of authority. But it may be stated without hesitation that there is no positive evidence at all for the existence of such a curtain, and abundant evidence against it.

unavoidable ? Moreover no man dies before his hour" ; and Montaigne elsewhere says : "That to philosophize is to learne how to die," and, "It consists not in number of yeerers, but in your will, that you have lived long enough."

ACT V : SCENE III

Analysis. The scene takes us to the British camp, near Dover. Lear and Cordelia are led in, prisoners. Edmund sends them, away, commanding their gaoler to hang Cordelia, and do it so adroitly, as to let it appear that she herself out of deep despair, committed suicide. The King in his reunion with Cordelia, drinks ecstasy, oblivious of everything else in the world :

> "Come, let's away to prison ;
> We two alone will sing like birds i' th' cage".

When she asks him of his blessing, he would himself kneel down, and ask her forgiveness. Thus praying, singing, and telling about the improbable tales of bygone times, laughing "at gilded butterflies" and hearing from poor wretches, the tidings about the court, as to who wins, who loses ; which party is in power and which not, they would pass their days happily. Like the spies, sent by God, they would penetrate the occult motives whereby all the human activities are governed. Albany, Goneril, and Regan enter, and Edmund is asked for the captives, "who were the opposites of this day's strife." He replies that he has sent them away in custody, for safety, pretending that they should better be tried when the passions of the victors have somewhat cooled down,

> "The question of Cordelia and her father
> Requires a fitter place."

Albany protests against the assumption of Edmund, whom he takes as merely "a subject of this war", and not "as a brother". This brings Regan, who tells them that she has chosen Edmund, her substitute, and therefore he has an equal status with Albany, in enjoying all the rights and benefits of the state. Goneril's jealousy now breaks out, and quarrel, stopped only by Regan's indisposition, (as Goneril has administered a poisonous potion on her earlier results.) Regan hails Edmund her "Lord and Master." Albany interposes and charges Edmund with manifold treasons and

he simultaneously exposes the liaison between Goneril and Edmund. Edmund throws down his glove of challenge, and the trumpet is ordered to be sounded, while Regan grows more and more sick from the poison, now prevailing on her body, and finally is led out. The herald sounds, and at the right moment Edgar appears. Despite the fact that Edgar does not disclose his name, birth and rank, Edmund is not deterred from the combat, considering his legal rights under the code of knighthood but of secondary importance, in the context of the situation. They fight and Edmund receiving a deadly wound falls. Goneril cries out that Edmund is unfairly beaten, as

> "By th' law of war thou wast not bound to answer
> An unknown opposite."

Albany sternly commands her to be silent, and upon her refusal, he calls her "most monstrous," and shows her the traitorous letter which she sent to her paramour, Edmund. At this she goes out, saying, "Ask me not what I know."

Edmund admits his crime, and Edgar declares himself. Edmund says that by a turn of Fortune's wheel, he was just now so high, is here laid low in death because of his crimes :

> "The wheel is come full circle ; I am here."

Edgar is asked to account for his presence there, at which he recounts his story, adding that the banished Kent is at hand. Now, a gentleman appears and shows the knife, with which Goneril has slain herself, confessing that she poisoned Regan, who also dies.

At this juncture, Kent enters, and asks for Lear and Cordelia, whereupon Edmund confesses that he has already issued orders for the execution of the father and his daughter. Edmund wants, despite of his naturally cruel disposition, to save the life of the two. The attendants hasten to prevent the catastrophe but it is too late, as Lear, bearing the dead Cordelia in his arms, enters. In a mixture of frenzy and pathos, the King attempts to discern the symptoms of life in the body of his loved one, but all is futile—"This feather stirs ; she lives !" His insanity once again seizes him in its powerful grip and, "He knows not what he says." The death of Edmund is made known by an officer, at which Albany, like a stoic, in spite of himself, says, "that's but a trifle here." Albany declares to

resign his absolute power in favour of the venerable King, as long as he lives, but Lear fancies Cordelia to be alive,

> "Do you see this? Look on her, look, her lips,
> Look there, look there !"

and passes, out of this joy, into the realm of "undiscovered country", wherefrom nobody returns. Albany wants now Kent and Edgar to shoulder the responsibilities and encumbrances of the government, so that the "gor'd state sustain." Kent cuts that short and utters in his characteristic prophetic vein :

> "I have a journey, sir shortly to go ;
> My master calls me, I must not say no."

Edgar says that they must yield to "the weight of this sad time", cast ruthlessly upon them. Let them give vent to natural feelings, without bothering about what they ought to speak. He praises the oldest Kent; they, who are young, "shall never see so much nor live so long", and the play ends.

Goggin thus comments on this scene :

"This, the last scene of 'Lear' inevitably invites comparison with the closing scene of 'Hamlet'. As in the earlier play 'proud death' holds feast in his eternal cell, and 'the quarry cries on havoc'; while innocent and guilty alike are involved in the tragic fate which horrible and unnatural crime has prepared and made necessary. But beyond the dark horror of the moment appears the dawn of better things for the distracted kingdom under the rule of Edgar and Albany, who like Fortinbras and Horatio in 'Hamlet' survive to restore order to a distracted realm."

Notes

1. **Good guard**—Let good guard be kept over them.

2-3. **Until their......them**—Until we know the wishes of the people in greater authority, who are to determine their fate. 'First'=merely tautological.

3. **That**—the antecedent is "their" in line two. Such construction, common in the earlier periods of the language, is now confined to poetry. **Censure**—pass judgment on them ; judge. Verity cites from the old play :

> "Cease, good my lords, and sue not to reverse
> Our censure, which is now irrevocable."

Cf. "Measure For Measure", I. iv. 72-74 :

"Has censur'd him
Already, and, as I hear, the Provost hath
A warrant for his execution."

4. **With best meaning** – *i.e.*, with the best of intentions ; despite following what is approved as best by our souls.

3-6. **We are not......frown**—These lines rhyme together, so as to produce an effect of moralizing.

6. **Out-frown** – subdue with a greater frown, frown down. Muir cites Seneca, "Oedipus", I. i. (tr. Nevile) :

"*Joc.* It is no poinct of courage stout to yeelde to fortunes frown.

Oed. Nay feare could never cause mee stoupe nor Fortune cast mee down."

7. **These daughters.........sisters** ?—These women, who call themselves your daughters and my sisters, nonetheless have shown little that is filial or sisterly.

8-19. **Come, let's......by th'moon**—The mental cataclysm has brought about a sea-change in Lear. In place of the Lear, who exclaimed, "Come not between the dragon and his wrath"; "the bow is bent, make from the shaft" ; we have Lear of the most childlike simplicity and infinite tenderness, whose very words transcend the logical analysis. The complete reconciliation between the father and the daughter leaves on the part of the former, no feeling of "sovereign shame," which earlier checked him from meeting her.

"He is the child-lover singing love songs to his little sweetheart. He is partly the naughty boy, partly the old man, who has offended his darling and would be forgiven. He is the child-poet weaving fantasies of song and fairy-tale with his beloved. And then he is the king, with a quiet laugh to the poor rogues who would brag of their familiarity with the ways of princes and kings and indulge in fashionable court gossip. And then he is himself again, laughing at the philosophers who would explain 'God' and the universe, and claim an intimate acquaintanceship with Him and His ways ; and be immortal—assured that he will live for ever with Cordelia, watching the great ones come and go......Never more will he and his beloved be parted, unless some one burns them out of prison."

9. **Cage**—a quibble on the word, as the secondary Elizabethan meaning of 'Cage', *viz.*, 'prison', is also implied here. *Cf.* "2 Henry VI", IV. ii. 56 : "His father had never a house but the cage."

10. **Kneel down**—"improbable fictions of bygone times." "King Leir", in which they kneel and ask for forgiveness of each other. Shakespeare introduces the incident of the source play twice (in IV. vii. 59, and here), but so excellently that only "its delicacy remains. while its external awkwardness disappears".

12. **Old tales**—"improbable fictions of bygone times." *Cf.* S. Daniel, "The Queen's Arcadia", IV. iii. 78 :

> "Then let us tell old tales, repeat our dreams
> Or anything rather than think of Love :"

and "Winter's Tale", V. ii. 59-61 : "Like an old tale still, which will have matter to rehearse, though credit be asleep and not an ear open."

13. **Gilded butterflies**—"gay courtiers"—(Craig) ; as in Marston's "Antonio and Mellidea" IV. i. 39 :

> "Troopes of pride butterflies, that flutter still
> In greatnesse summer that confirme a prince."

But Muir thinks it more likely that Lear is referring to actual butterflies, the other meaning merely suggesting the "Court news" in the following line.

14-15. **And we'll talk......out**—And we will also have talks with them, as to who is in favour, who is thrown out of it, which party is in power and which in the cold shade of opposition. *Cf.* "Coriolanus', I. i. 195-99, "They'll sit by the fire, and presume to know What's done i' the Capitol ; who's like to rise, Who thrives and who declines, side factions and give out Conjectural marriages ; making parties strong And feebling such as stand not in their liking."

16. **Take upon's**—profess to understand and explain. *Cf.* "2 Henry IV", VI. i. 60 : "I take not on me here as a physician." **The mystery of things**—The mysterious course of happenings in the world, the riddle of human life and destiny. *Cf.* Florio (Tr. Montaigne's, "Essays", (ii. 2) : "The knowledge of causes doth only concern him who hath the conduct of things."

16-17. **And take............spies**—"As if we were angels, commissioned to survey and report the lives of men, and were consequently endowed with the power of prying into the original motives of action and the mysteries of conduct."
—(Johnson).

17. **Spies**—"Spies placed by God Almighty to watch his motions." 'Gods'—plural as Shakespeare was writing of a pagan world. **Wear out**—outlive.

18. **Packs and sects**—Cliques and parties; confederacies and parties." 'Packs' is used for 'combinations' or 'collections' as in a 'pack of cards"—(Johnson). According to Moberly. "Shakespeare had seen the fall and death of the Earl of Essex, which was probably in his mind here."

19. **That ebb......moon**—as flickering and wayward as the tides, that are swayed by the moon.

20. **Upon such sacrifices**—an unconscious premonition of the imminent catastrophe. Kittredge explains, "as those Cordelia has made for Lear's sake", but Bradley seems to be more convincing: "as their renunciation of the world." There is however an undenying suggestion of human sacrifice that looks forward to the murder of Cordelia.

20-25. **Upon such..........starv'd first**—"This is not mania, but neither is it sound mind. It is the emotional excitability often seen in extreme age, as it is depicted in the early scenes of the drama, and it is precisely true to the probabilities of the mind's history, that this should be the phase of infirmity, displaying itself at this moment. Any other dramatist than Shakespeare would have represented the poor old King quite restored to the balance and control of his faculties. The complete efficiency of filial love would have been made to triumph over the laws of mental function. But Shakespeare has represented the exact degree of improvement which was probable under the circumstances, namely, restoration from the intellectual mania which resulted from the combined influence of physical and moral shock with persistence of the emotional excitement and disturbance which is the incurable and unalterable result of passion exaggerated by long habitude and by the malign influence of extreme age." —(Dr. Bucknill, quoted by Furness).

21. **Incense**—throwing incense by way of approval; sprinkling incense for approbation and consecration. "An

extremely noble thought." **Have I caught thee**—Now that I have caught you, I shall not let myself be separated from you : 'caught' indicates the eagerness with which Lear has found her again, at long last. *Cf.* "The Merry Wives of Windsor", III iii. 36 :

"Have I caught thee, my heavenly jewel ?"

22. **He that......heaven**—Any human agency, as such can never part us from each other. "Nothing earthly will part us."—(Tovey).

23. **And fire.........foxes**—As foxes uses to be driven out from their holes by fire and smoke. *Cf.* Marlowe, "Edward the Second", III. ii. 127 :

> "Advance your standards, Edward, in the field,
> And march to fire them from their starting-holes."

24. **Good years**—"the deuce" or "cursed time". "Good year came to be used in imprecatory phrases, as denoting some undefined malefic power or agency".—(Golding). Muir suggests, "Lear may mean that Goneril and Regan will be destroyed not by misfortunes but by their evil prosperity, and till the day of their ruin he and Cordelia will not deign to weep. When Lear does weep next, Goneril and Regan are both dead". **Them**—*i.e.*, their captors, whom he scorns to name. **Flesh and fell**—*i.e.*, wholly ; altogether. *Cf.* "Lay Folks' Mass-book"—'Apostle's Creed' : "Up he rose flesh and fell." 'Fell=skin ; properly the hide of a beast.

28. **Note**—the warrant for the execution of Lear and Cordelia.

29. **One steep.........thee**—I have obtained one step of promotion by way of recognizing your sincere services.

31-32. **That men............is**—Men should conduct themselves according to the circumstances, little bothering about the ethical values such as compassion and humanity, these being irrelevant.

23. **Sword**—a swordsman ; soldier.

34. **Will not bear question**—the business being, considerably weighty, provides no scope for discussion ; "Will not bear to be discussed or argued about."—(Wright). The reason may be "either it must be done promptly, or because it is too delicate a matter to be expressed in words." Muir cites from

"King Leir", 1309-10, when Regan bribes a man to murder Leir, she says :

> "It is a thing of right strange consequence,
> And well I cannot utter it in words."

35. **Or......means** Or seek some one else to raise your fortune. Don't expect from me to advance your interests.

36. **Write happy**—describe yourself happy, and fortunate.

Cf. "All's well that Ends well", II. iii. 67 :
"I'ld give bay Curtal and his furniture,
My mouth no more were broken than these boys,
And writ as little beard" ;
and, "Measure for Measure", III. iv. 16 :
"Let's write good angel on the devil's horn."

37. **Carry it so**—Manage the affair adroitely, so that it may appear that Cordelia out of deep despair, slew herself. *Cf.* "Othello", I. i. 67 :

> "What a full fortune does the thick-lips owe,
> If he can carry't thus."

39. **I cannot......oats**—I am not a mere beast of burden like a horse, nor do I want to be driven by necessity after the war to become an impoverished agricultural labourer.

40. **If it do't**—*Cf.* "Macbeth", I. vii. 46 :

> *Macb.* I dare do all that may become a man ;
> Who dares do more is none.
> *Lady Macb.* What beast was't then,
> That made you break this enterprise to
> [me ?"

41. **Strain**—disposition ; descent ; lineage, *Cf.* "Much Ado About Nothing", II. i 394 : "He is of a noble strain, of approved valour and confirmed honesty", and "Cymbeline", IV. ii. 24 : "O noble strain ! O worthliness of nature ! breed of greatness !

42. **Led you well**—offered you excellent opportunity, for showing your courage.

43. **Opposites**—adversaries ; opponents ; enemies. *Cf.* "Twelfth Night", III. iv. 292 : "The most skilful, bloody and fatal opposite......in any part of Illyria."

45-46. **As we......determine**—To give them a treatment, which shall not be more harsh than what our safety demand ; or which shall be determined by the character of deserts and offence. Albany deliberately becomes politic in the use of his words.

48. **To some ...... guard**—to some confinement with a guard to be watchful of him. 'Retention'=confinement.

49. **Whose**—*i.e* , King's.

50. **To pluck......side**—to win the hearts and affections of the common people. **Common bosom**—popular favour ; the sympathy and the affections of the people at large.

51. **Impress'd lances**—"conscripted lances" ; *i.e.*, soldiers, the spearmen, we have ourselves levied, whom we have hired by the payment of press-money. **Our ...in our**—"It is to be supposed that Albany here manifests some surprise at Edmund s assumption of equality, ('our', twice used)."

51-52. **In our...... ... them**—into the eyes of us, who command them. *N.B.* For 'our' as an antecedent to the relative, see Abbott, § 218.

54. **At further space**—at some later date.

57. **The best quarrels**—the battles that are fought for the most just and righteous cause. **In the heat**—before the passions have cooled down ; in the excitement of the battle, when the passions are naturally roused high. "Edmund implies that Lear and Cordelia would not get a fair trial under the circumstances."—(Muir).

58. **That feel their sharpness**—*i.e.*, those who denounce the battle, as having been fought for no just cause ; who suffer from the consequences of the warfare.

59-60. **The question ....place** the time and place are not adequate to decide the fate of Cordelia and her father.

60. **By your patience**—with your permission ; if I should be pardoned for saying so.

61-62. **I hold......brother**—I consider you as merely one fighting under our command, not as a brother, entitled to the enjoyment of equal benefits with us. "Albany's vacillation, caused by his misgivings about the moral rightness of his

position, is now a thing of the past ; we see now his latent strength of character asserting itself".

62. **List**—please ; wish ; to have pleasure in ; from Anglo-Saxon, "lystan"=please, pleasure. **That's.........him**—that entirely depends upon our pleasure as to how far he would be honoured with our special favour.

63. **Our pleasure**—our will in this particular matter. **Demanded**—asked.

64. **Ere you.........far**—Before you spoke so much on the subject.

65. **Bore the.........person**—acted as my deputy, and as such was having the authority of my person and position, since I have chosen him my lord.

66-67. **The which.........brother**—This intimacy of relationship does naturally confer upon him the right to be called your brother and hence in the enjoyment of equal status and benefits. 'Immediacy'=holding the authority directly, without any superior; 'being my immediate representative' : "supremacy, in opposition to subordination."—(Johnson). *Cf.* "2 Henry IV", IV. iv. 42 :

> "My due from thee is this imperial crown,
> Which as immediate from thy place and blood
> Derives itself to me."

67. **Not so hot**—don't be so excited and impetuous in exalting him.

68-69. **In his......your addition**—He is exalted because of his own noble qualities, not at all because of the rights and titles that has conferred upon him, as they are but superfluous. Goneril in a sarcastic tone plays upon 'grace', (line 65) uttered by Regan. She meant that Edmund had enough of intrinsic grace, Regan need not augment it by any additional grace, which would be but of little value to him.

69. **In my rights**—invested with the rights, that belong to me.

70. **Compeers**—equals.

71. **That were..... you**—that would be the most which could he said of him, even if he were your husband.

N.B. Folio assigns this speech to Alb., Quarto gives it to Goneril. Goggin suggests, "it seems more natural in Goneril's mouth ; while Albany's intervention in the quarrel would not at this point be very effective."

72. **Jesters do......prophets**—Many a word, though spoken in jest, come out true.

73. **That eye...........asquint**—Steevens compares the proverb : "Love being jealous makes a good eye look asquint". **Look'd but asquint**—saw things crookedly ; took but the distorted view of things.

74-75. **Else I...........stomach**—otherwise I reply your words, with a flood of angry words.

N.B. The stomach was regarded as the seat of anger ; the liver, that of courage. *Cf.* "Titus Andronicus", III. i. 234 : "To ease their stomachs with their bitter tongues."

76. **Patrimony**—right or estate, inherited from a father or from ancestors, from Latin "patrimonium"=paternal estate.

77. **The wall is thine**—Presumably Regan compares herself to a city surrendering at discretion : She yields up everything, that she has, to Edmund. Some editors think 'walls' referring to her own person, "The whole is thine." Wright thinks the words refer to Regan's castle. "Assuredly this refers to Regan's person, common metaphor in Shakespeare."—(Schmidt). *Cf.* "Cymbeline", II. i. 67 : "The heavens hold firm, The walls of thy dear honour." -Sonnet, 146 : "Painting thy outward walls so costly gay"; and also "Rape of Lucrece," 464: "Rude ram, to batter such an ivory wall."

This is obviously correct, and Kittredge in support of Schmidt says a woman's heart was often compared to a fortress, long before Shakespeare's time.

78. **Witness the world**—Let the entire world bear witness.

79. **Mean you.........him ?**—The grim sarcasm may be noticed. Goneril has already administered the poison on Regan and hence it would be rather impossible for the latter to fulfil her worldly desires.

80. **The let-alone......will**—It does not depend upon you to permit or prevent this.

"Whether he shall not or shall depend not on your choice".—(Johnson.) Ritson does not put a hyphen in 'let-alone', and evidently takes 'let' in the sense of 'hindrance'. He finds Johnson's interpretation as "absolutely unintelligible." and suggests his own : "Albany means to tell his wife that, however she might want the power, she evidently did not want the inclination, to prevent the match."

81. **Half-blooded**—you bastard ; one that derives his birth, so far as it is reputable, from one parent only.

82. **Let the drum......thine**—Let the drum strike up, so as to prove the fact that you wield my authority.

84. **Attaint**—So reads the Quarto ; the Folio has 'arrest'.

84-85. **In thy ....serpent**—*i.e.*, in your impeachment, this guilded serpent also, for "to accuse Edmund is equal to accuse his guilty associate", *viz*., Goneril. "Guilded serpent" =superficially beautiful ; "Venomous creature,......decked out in splendour".

86. I **bar it......wife**—on account of Goneril, having the first claim to Edmund as a husband.

87. **Sub-contracted**—betrothed. Shakespeare does not use the word 'contract' whether verb or noun, in the commercial legal sense, it has now.

88. **Her husband**—and consequently the protector of her rights. The tone in which Albany speaks is one of derisive irony. **Banns**—a proclamation of marriage. **"Contradict your banns"**—forbid (by making formal objections) your projected marriage with Edmund.

89. **Will marry**—are determined to marry.

90. **Is bespoke**—is already engaged. **An interlude**—A timely comic diversion in this love affair (of Regan and Edmund).

"Interlude"=a short piece introduced between the Acts of the Mysteries and Moralities ; a short piece of music played between the parts of the drama. From Latin 'inter'=between ; and 'ludus'=play.

93. **Heinous**—obnoxious ; hateful.

94. **Pledge**—a gage ; something thrown down as a

challenge, *e.g.*, a glove. **Make**—so reads the Folio ; the Quarto has 'prove'.

95. **Thou.......... ..less**--that you are not less in any respect.

96. **Sick ! O, sick**—Dr. Buchnill comments thus : "The gradual sickening of Regan, from the poison she has taken, is true to nature." Contrast the rapid death of the queen in "Hamlet", V. ii. 300-21.

97. **Medicine**—the poisonous potion, that Goneril administered on Regan ; a euphemism for poison.

98. **Exchange**—a technical term for the glove thrown down in exchange. **What ....is**—"Whoever in the world he may be."

101. **Who not ?**—on anybody who might be ready to appear, so as to answer my challenge. **Maintain** justify ; vindicate.

103. **Virtue**—valour ; the primary meaning of the Latin 'virtus'.

109. **Trumpet**—probably here "trumpeter". In Shakespeare, the word was used both for the instrument and the performer.

111. **Maintain upon**—maintain by combat with.

112. **Supposed**—as opposed to the true Earl.

115-117. **Sound.........again**—"It is better to give to the herald, all these instructions to the trumpeter, rather than to give the first to Edmund (as in Quarto). If the Herald calls for the second and third blasts, he should also call for the first, as Jennes points out."—(Muir.)

Stage Direction. **With a trumpet before him**—"Preceded by a trumpeter."

118-119. **Ask him... trumpet**—"This is according to the ceremonials of the trial by combat in cases criminal. 'The Appellant and his procurator first come to the gate (*i.e.*, of the barriers)...The constable and Marshall demand by voice of herald, what he is, and why he comes so arrayed', Selden's Duello"—(Blakeway).

112. **Bare-gnawn**—my flesh all gnawed away. **Canker-bit**—withered ; eaten by the caterpillar, the worm that preys upon blossoms.

124. **Cope**—encounter ; *Cf.* "Troilus and Cressida", I. ii. 34

"He yesterday coped Hector in the battle."

Literally it means 'to barter or exchange.'

125. **Speaks for**—answers, in response to the challenge.

127. **If my.........heart**—if the allegations that I am about to utter are undeserved ; "if the heart of him whom I am about to denounce, conscious of its own nobility, is wounded by my words"—(Deighton.)

128. **Thy arm......justice**—let it be proved by the courage, with which you aquit yourself.

128-130. **Here is mine...protest**—"Here I draw my sword. Behold ! it is the privilege or right of my profession to draw it against a traitor. I protest therefore, etc. It is not the charge itself, but right of bringing the charge and maintaining it with his sword, which Edgar calls the privilege of his profession." —(Malone).

Moberly suggests : "I hold here my sword, to which I am entitled by honourable birth, as well as my oath and profession of knighthood."

131. **Maugre**—in spite of. *Cf.* "Twelfth Night", III. i. 163 :

"I love thee so, that maugre all thy pride
Nor wit nor reason can my passion hide."

132. **Victor**—victorious. **Fire-new**—brand new ; a metaphor from coining. *Cf.* "Twelfth Night", III. ii. 23 : "You should then have accosted her ; and with some excellent jests, fire-new from the mint, you should have banged the youth into dumbness."

133. **Heart** courage.

135. **Conspirant**—conspiring or conspirator. The word occurs in Harsnet's "Declaration" as a substantive.

136. **Upward**—top.

137. **To the......foot**—"to the very lowest part of your body, yea even to the dust beneath your foot."=(Deighton).

138. **Toad-spotted**=stained with infamy, as a toad is spotted and is venomous.

139. **My best spirits**=all the courage that I have in me. **Bent**=fully resolved ; determined.

141. **In wisdom**—*i.e.*, If I were to act prudently. It was not incumbent on Edmund's part to fight with a man of inferior rank. Malone thus comments : "Because, if his adversary was not of equal rank, Edmund might have declined the combat. Hence the herald proclaimed : "If any man of quality or degree etc. So Goneril afterwards says (lines 153-55) : 'By the law of arms thou wast not bound to answer an unknown opposite'."

143. **And that**—and since that. **Some say**—some taste ; evidence. *Cf.* Tyndal, "Answer to Sir Thomas More" : "And to give a say or a taste of what trouble shall follow." Wright compares Massinger, "The Unnatural Combat", iii. 1:

"..........................Or to take
A say of venison or stale fowl."

144. **Safe and nicely**—safely and nicely ; "cautiously and punctiliously" ; with letter of the law on my side ; with clear legal justification.

N.B. In such pairs the adverbial termination 'ly' is dropped after a monosyllabic adjective, which can be used as an adverb without change. See Abbott, § 397.
Delay—postpone or refuse.

145. **I disdain and spurn**—*i.e.*, I scorn to insist on my legal rights under the code of knighthood. Edmund changes the construction in the middle of the sentence."—(Muir.)

146. **Back do... ....head**—I fling these charges of treason back in your teeth. *Cf* "A Midsummer Night's Dream," I. i. 106 : "I'll avouch it to his head."

147. **Hell-hated**—as much abominable as hell.

148. **Which**—*i.e.*, these treasons. **For**—since. **Glance**—glide. **Scarcely bruise**—hardly felt by you.

151. **Save him ! save him** !—Johnson explains thus: "Albany desires that Edmund's life might be spared at present, only to obtain his confession, and to convict him openly by his own letter." Some editors, including Theobald, assign these words to Goneril. **Practice**—treachery.

153. **Opposite**—adversary ; opponent.

154. **Cozen'd**—deceived ; cheated : 'to cozen' means to pretend to be his cousin with a view to getting something out

of him. Cotgrave, Fr. "cousiner"...'to claim kindred for advantage or particular ends ; as he, who, to save charges in travelling goes from house to house, as cousin to the honour of every one' ; in Modern Fr...it implies, 'to call cousin, to sponge, to live upon other people'. (Skeat : "Etymological Dictionary").

155. **This paper**—Goneril's love letter she wrote to Edmund. **Stopple**—so reads the Quarto I. Presumably the Folio 'stop' is a sophistication. **Hold, sir**—spoken to Edmund: take this paper, in your hands. Kittredge takes it to mean, "just a moment" ; 'hold' being used when any one presented anything to another.

156. **Thou**– Krischboum thinks it is addressed to Edmund, but the following line, being addressed to Goneril, 'thou' too is probably addressed to her.

158. **Say, if I do**—Suppose I do know the paper.

160. **Know'st thou this paper** ?—Goneril's letter to Edmund, which Edgar had intercepted. **Ask me .....know**—the Quarto assigns this to Goneril ; the Folio to Edmund. Knight asks : "Why should Albany address the question 'know'st thou this paper ?' to Goneril, when he had previously said to her : 'No tearing, lady ; I perceive you know it' ?" But Goneril has onlv implied that she knows the paper in the words "Say, if I do" ; in fact, what Albany wants is a direct admission. Hudson follows the Folio and thus comment :

"Albany might well ask Edmund, 'Know'st thou this paper ?' for, in fact, Goneril's letter did not reach Edmund ; he had not seen it. Edmund, with some spirit of manhood, refuses to make any answer that will criimnate or blacken a woman, by whom he is beloved ; and then proceeds consistently to answer Edgar's charges." Dyce thinks that these words are manifestly those of Goneril in her desperation and proved by Edmund's next speech not to belong to him. Bradley in his illuminating comments, says :

"I believe the Folios are right in giving the words, 'Ask me not what I know' to Edmund. It has been pointed out by Knight that the question 'Know'st thou his paper ?' can not be very well addressed to Goneril, for Albany has already said to her, 'I perceive you know it' : It is possible to get over this difficulty by saying that Albany wants her confession but there is another fact which seems to have passed unnoticed.

When Albany is undoubtedly speaking to his wife, he uses the plural pronoun, 'shut your mouth dame', 'no tearing, lady; I perceive you know it' When then he asks, 'know'st thou this paper?' he is probably not speaking to her.

"I should take the passage thus—At 'Hold, sir (omitted in Quartos), Albany holds the letter out towards Edmund for him to see or possibly gives it him. The next line, with its 'thou', is addressed to Edmund, whose 'reciprocal vows' are mentioned in the letter. Goneril snatches at it to tear it up: and Albany, who does not know whether Edmund ever saw the letter or not, says to her 'I perceive, you know it,' the 'you' being emphatic (her very wish to tear it showed she knew what was in it). She practically admits her knowledge, defies him, and goes out to kill herself. He exclaims in horrar at her, and, turning again to Edmund, asks if he knows it. Edmund, who of course does not know it, refuses to answer (like Iago), not (like Iago) out of defiance, but from chivalry towards Goneril; and having refused to answer this charge, he goes on to admit the charges brought against himself previously by Albany (82 f.) and Edgar (130 f.) I should explain the charge from 'you' to 'thou' in this speech by supposing that at first he is speaking to Edmund and Edgar together."

161. **Govern her**—keep proper watch and restraint over her.

164. **'Tis past......I**—"that is a thing of past and equally so am I."

165. **That hast......me?**—who have had the good fortune to surpass me.

166. **Let's.........charity**—Let me forgive you for your crimes against me, as you have pardoned me for killing you.

"Our author, by negligence, gives his heathens the sentiments and practices of Christianity".—(Johnson). Johnson's charge finds a fitting answer by Cowden Clarke: "Can we believe that the most careful dramatist that ever wrote, set down anything 'by negligence'? Is not the virtue of a magnanimous generosity proper to human nature in all ages and in all creeds?"

167. **No less in blood**—of equal birth with you.

168. **The more**—"I am inclined to think that this

imperfect line is corrupted, and that it was written : 'If more, the more thou than hast wronged me".—(White).

170. **The gods are just**—These words are an adequate reply to Gloucester's cry, IV. i. 36. Bishop Wordsworth compares, "Wisdom". xi. 16 : "That wherewith a man sinneth, by the same also shall be punished." Noble also compares "Wisdom" xii. 23 : "Wherefore thou hast tormented the wicked that have lived a dissolute life by their owne imaginations." "Wherefore whereas men have lied dissolutely and unrighteously, thou hast punished them sore with their owne abominations."

Empson compares III. iv. 74. Also *Cf.* the old play "King Leir", 1909 : "The heavens are just, and hate impiety."

171. **To plague us**—execute their vengeance upon us.

172. **The dark.........place**—the adulterous bed. **Got**—begot.

173. **'Tis true**—What you have said as to the God's making our sins the means of our punishment, is true.

174. **The wheel.........circle**—I being brought to breathe my last, the revolution of events seem to have been completed.

Cf. Tourneur, "The Revenger's Tragedy", II. i. 77 :
"This wheele comes about."

Kittredge suggests that Edmund refers to the fact that he is back at the bottom, where he was before Fortune's wheel began to revolve. Also *Cf.* "Twelfth Night". V. i. 385 : "And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges."

178. **Worthy**—noble.

181. **List**—used transitively. *Cf.* "Hamlet", I. iii. 30 : "If with too credant ear you list his songs."

183. **That we the.........die**—that makes us hourly willing to undergo the torture, as great as that of death.

186. **Shift**—change. *Cf.* "Cymbeline", I. ii. 1 : "Sir, I would advise you to shift a shirt ; the violence of action hate made you reek as a sacrifice."

189. **Rings**—sockets of his eyes. *Cf.* "Pericles", III. ii. 99 ;

"Her eyelids, cases to those heavenly jewels,
Which Pericles hath lost.',

190. **New**—recently.

192. **Fault**—mistake. Delius suggests, 'misfortune.'

Why does Edgar put off so long the revealing of himself to his blind father, as he truly says he ought to have done? Bradley says, the answer to it left to mere conjecture. *Cf.* "Pericles", IV. ii. 72:

"The more my fault
To scape his hands where I was like to die."

193. **Some halt-hour**—about a half hour.

194. **Success**—consequence of an action, whether good or bad.

196. **Pilgrimage**—the word is quite characteristic of Edgar. His trials and tribulations, worries and wanderings have not been to him a mere secular adventure, but a pilgrimage, in that they have brought him to reconcile with his father. **Flaw'd**—already damaged by the heavy pressure of sufferings.

197. **Conflict**—*i.e.*, in between the joy and grief.

202. **More woeful**-"more and that of a more woeful nature." *Cf.* "Coriolanus", I. ix 32:

"Of all the horses,
Whereof we have ta'en good and good store."
—(cited by Deighton).

203. **Dissolve**—melt in tears. *Cf.* "Antony and Cleopatra", V. ii. 297-99

"Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain, that I may say
The gods themselves do weep."

204. **Period**—point; termination.

205—207. **But...........extremity**—but another sorrow by enlarging, what is already too much would Make "much" into "more" and would surpass the extreme limit of woe. **Top extremity**—go beyond the extreme point, "to out-top the very top to itself." *Cf.* "Cymbeline". III. ii. 58:

"For mine's beyond beyond."

208. **Big in clamour**—loudly lamenting over my father's

death ; loud in my exclamations of grief, big loud. *Cf.* "As You Like It", II. vii. 161 :

"his big manly voice."

209. **Estate**—condition. Wright compares "Luke", i. 48 : "For he hath regarded the low estate of his hand maiden."

212. **Bellow'd**—shouted aloud ; made a violent outcry. From Anglo-Saxon : "bylgian"=to roar.

213. **As**—as if. **Threw.........father**—threw himself on the dead body of my father.

216. **Grew puissant**—grew powerful ; overmastering. *Cf.* "Henry V", II. iv. 64 :

Awake remembrance of these valiant dead
And let your puissant arm renew their feats".

The strings of life—Heart-strings ; Kent is dying. *Cf.*— "Richard III", IV. iv. 365 :

"Harp on it still shall I till heart-string break."

218. **Tranc'd**—entranced ; senseless

22. **Enemy**—hostile. *Cf.* "Coriolanus", IV. iv. 24 : "this enemy town".

221. **Improper for a slave**—"such as even a slave could hardly be called upon to perform."(Deighton).

223. **Smokes**—steams.

228. **Contracted**—betrothed.

229. **Now......instant**—Now we, a moment hence, will be united by death.

S. D **Enter Kent**—Folio marks Kent's entrance here, but Quarto does it three lines later. He comes slowly down the stage, while Albany is speaking.—(Muir).

230. **Produce**—*Cf.* "Julius Caesar", III. i. 228 :

"Produce his body to the market-place."

231-232. **This.........pity**—Trywhitt thus comments : "If Shakespeare has studied Aristotle all his life, he would not perhaps have been able to mark with more precision the distinct operations of terror (*Cf.* makes us 'tremble') and pity." —Aristotle says, "Tragedy......through pity and fear effects the proper purgation of these emotions."

233. **Compliment**—ceremony; formal respect; greetings.

234. **Very manners**—"even the slightest good breeding"; used as singular. Wright compares "Romeo and Juliet", V. iii. 213: "What manners is in this ?"

235. **To bid my king**—Albany, in the excitement connected with Edmund's defeat, has forgotten the King, about whom he had first come into conflict with Edmund. Kent's words now remind him of this. **Aye**—for ever; from "Icelandic 'ei', ever-Anglo-Saxon 'a' ever".—(Skeat: Etymological Dictionary).

226. **Great.........forgot**—We have but forgotten an extremely important thing. "This amnesia on everybody's part is necessary for the climax that follows"—Kittredge. Muir thus observes: "But, after all, there is no reason why Albany should suspect that Lear and Cordelia were in danger, and he had had plenty to occupy his mind during the wasted ten minutes."

238. **Object**—sight. Muir thus comments: "Kirschbaum, defending the Folio through thick and thin, takes this to refer to Edmund, lying wounded. It is more natural for it to refer to the bodies of Goneril and Regan, especially when one takes Edmund's next speech into consideration. He is really answering Kent's question. The bodies are brought on the stage so that Lear can be confronted with his three daughters, as in the first scene of the play."

239. **Yet.........belov'd**—Edmund's sole thought is of himself. But it is a brilliant stroke to reveal here, that Edmund's career of crime was caused by his feeling, that he was not loved.—(Heilman).

243. **I pant for life**—I pant for life in order that I may have sufficient time to save Lear and Cordelia.

244. **Despite......nature**—as opposed to my naturally cruel disposition.

245. **Brief**—quick, be on your heels. *Cf.* "Troilus and Cressida," IV. v. 237: "Thou art too brief" and "Richard III," II. 43:

> "If you will live, lament; if die, be brief,
> That our swift-winged souls may catch the King's."

From Latin 'brevis'=short.

245-246. **For my......Cordelia**– as I have issued a writ for the execution of Lear and Cordelia.

248. **Who has the office** ?—who has been commissioned so as to follow your command ?

249. **Thy token of reprieve**—Your sign agreed upon in case of reprieve. 'Reprieve'=delay in the execution of a criminal ; suspense of a criminal sentence.

N.B. Edgar has grasped the situation, and suggests "token of reprieve." His promptitude has been well contrasted with Albany's ineffective "Run, O, run !" addressed to nobody in particular. From Latin "reprobare"=to reprove.

255. **Fordid**—destroyed. The prefix 'for' provides an intensive force. *Cf.* "Hamlet", V i. 244 :

> "The curse they follow did with desperate hand,
> Fordo its own life.

257. **Man of stones**—man made of stone. *Cf.* "Richard III", III. vii. 224 : "I am not made of stones."

Walker, "*Critical Examination of the Text*" cites various instances from this play to show that the dramatist often added a final 's' to words, as a result of a mere mechanical turn of his hand. Hence 'stone', that Shakespeare should probably have written.

262. **Mist**—cloud. **Stain**—blur with moisture. **Stone**—here it means a mirror, which was made of crystal or polished stone ; that being common in Shakespeare's time.

263. **Promis'd end**—*i.e.*, of the world ; The Last Judgment ; the predicted end of the world. Mason compares, "Mark", xiii. 12 and 19. The passage in Mark that refers to the Jerusalem, was commonly taken as a prediction of the end of the world.

264. **Or..... horror** ?—or the very image of that dreadful doom. *Cf.* "Macbeth", II. iii. 83 :

> "Up, up, and see
> The great doom's image !"

Fall and cease—Presumably an adjuration to the heavens to fall and make all things cease. "Fall, heaven ! and let things cease !"—(Capell.) The image of The Last Judgement continues

the general fall and dissolution of the world, "Fall heavens and crush a world which is such a scene of calamity."

265. **This feather stirs**—*i.e.*, with her breath. *Cf.* "2 Henry IV", IV. v. 32 :

> "By his gates of breath
> There lies a downy feather which stirs not."

266. **A chance**—a happiness. *Cf.* "Macbeth". II, iii. 96 : "Had I but died an hour before this chance, I had lived a blessed time."

270. **I might......her**—provided you had not distracted my attention. "They have distracted his attention for a moment and in that moment he might have saved his child."—(Moberly).

274. **A-hanging**—in the act of hanging ; on hanging. See Abbott, § 24.

276. **Falchion**—a light sword, with a point a little bent inwards. 'Biting'—cutting deep. *Cf.* "Merry Wives of Windsor", II. i. 135 : "I have a sword and it shall bite." "Good"—a common epithet. used by every soldier for his weapon. *Cf.* "Othello", V. ii. 262 :

> "That, with this little arm and this good sword
> I have made my way through more impediments,
> Than twenty times your stop."

278. **Crosses spoil me**—misfortunes, that have enfeebled me as a swordsman.

280-281. **If fortune.........behold**—If Fortune makes it a boast that there are two persons whom she once favoured, but afterwards despised and depressed, one of them can be seen here, *i.e.*, Lear, the other person being Kent himself. Mason thus explains : "If Fortune.........should brag of two persons one of whom she had highly elevated, and the other she had woefully depressed, we now behold the latter." Bradley interprets :

"Did Fortune ever show the extremes both of her love and of her hatred to any other man, as she has shown them to this man ?"

282. **This is a dull sight**—These eyes of mine are extremely dull. Indeed a "melancholy spectacle."

287. **I'll see that straight**—I will attend to that in a moment ; I will see soon, if it is as you describe.

288. **That.........decay**—that from the very beginning of the change and decline of your fortunes.

290. **Nor no man else**—there was in fact nobody else that followed you in the days of your misfortunes. (Though the Fool was also there), but "Fool's services are hardly material." "Welcome ! alas, here's no welcome for me or anyone."
—(Capell).

291. **Fordone**—destroyed ; as in line 255.

292. **And ....dead**—"in despair ; so that their souls are lost, without hope of salvation"—Schmidt. Schmidt compares "Measure for Measure", IV. ii. 152 :

"Insensible of morality and desperately moral", *i.e.*, devoted to death without hope of salvation.

294. **That we............him**—that we try to make him recognize us.

297. **Great decay**—Lear, who is the ruined piece of nature. Abstract for the concrete. "The terrible disorder of the realm."—(Deighton).

298. **Resign**—"Lear, then dies a King."

301. **Boot**—amends ; advantage ; increase. The modern phrase 'to boot' is used of something thrown in with a bargain. 'Boot' originally meant a remedy ; from Anglo-Saxon 'bot'= compensation ; amends. **And such addition**—with such additional rights and titles, by way of enhancement and surplusage in dignity. "Honours"=noble needs.

304. **O ! see, see !**—"Some sudden physical change passes over the King, and prepares the spectators for his end."

305. **My poor fool**—Cordelia ; 'fool' was often used as a term of endearment and pity in Elizabethan English. Some editors think that it refers to Fool, but he had dropped out of action long since, there is no reason to think that he had been hanged, and the very next words of Lear, "No, no, no life !" makes it clear that he has only Cordelia in his mind. *Cf.* "Two Gentlemen of Verona", IV. iv. 98 :

"Alas, poor fool, why do I pity him
That with his very heart despiseth me ?"

and, "Much Ado About Nothing", II. i. 326 :

"I thank it, poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care."

Empson, following Bradley, remarks : "that his mind has wandered so far that he no longer distinguishes the two... ...Lear is now thrown back into something like the storm phase of his madness, the effect of immediate shock, and the Fool seems to him part of it. The only affectionate dependent he had recently, has been hanged, and the only one he had then was the Fool."

309. **Undo this button**—Presumably Lear feels some suffocation, which he imagines, to be caused by the tightness of his clothes and hence the opening of button, a relief to him. The suffering seems to prevent his soul from taking its flight.

310. **Look**—Lear dies of ecstasy, imagining Cordelia to be alive.

312. **Break... .....break**—Bradley suggests that Kent may be speaking of his own heart. Quarto assigns this speech to Lear, who being beyond speech, it is rather an impossibility.

313. **Ghost**—departing spirit.

314. **Tough**—rigid ; obdurate.

315. **Longer**—"Syllepsis, (a) for a longer time, (b) with his body, extended further by the rack."—(Muir).

317. **He........life**—His physical and mental powers being thoroughly exhausted, his (Lear's) clinging to life so long might be regarded as a usurpation of something to which he virtually lost all claim.

318-319. **Our.....woe** Our present business is but to see that the entire realm goes into mourning.

320. **Gor'd**—sorely wounded ; rent and wounded by divisions ; "literally pierced as by a spear, Anglo-Saxon, 'gar' =spear".

321. **Journey**—*i.e.*, to another world ; he has not long to live.

Cf. "Hamlet," III. i. 79-80 :

"The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns."

and also Marlowe's "Edward the Second," V. vi. 65-66 : Mortimer before being conducted to his execution says :

> "Weep not for Mortimer,
> That scorns the world, as a traveller
> Goes to discover countries yet unknown."

322. **My master**—of course, Lear. Kent implies that his life-work being over, Albany must not look to him for help to "rule in his realm."

323—326. **The weight of......so long**—Quarto assigns these lines to the Duke. Critics feel that the concluding speech should be given to the person of the highest rank who survives. "But Edgar has to reply to Albany's speech and the words 'we that are young' come somewhat more naturally from his mouth than from that of Albany."—(Muir).

Schmidt thus comments : "This speech clearly belongs to Edgar, from whom a reply to Albany is due. Moreover, the substance of what he says, *viz.*, that for the moment he is incapable of saying what he ought, by no means befits Albany, who during this last tragic scene, has not for a moment lost sight of public interests. On the other hand, the last two lines are in character, if spoken by the Duke, to whom dramatic etiquette gives the last word. Perhaps the true order might be restored by dividing these last few lines between them."

325-326. **The oldest hath.........so long**—Bradley, in his valuable comments, says : "As to the meaning of the last two lines (a poor conclusion to such a play) I should suppose that 'the oldest' is not Lear, but 'the oldest of us' *viz.*, Kent, the one survivor of the old generation ; and this is the more probable if there is a reference to him in the preceding lines. The last words seem to mean, 'We, that are young, shall never see so much and yet live so long' ; *i.e.*, if we suffer so much, we shall not bear it as he has. If the Qq. 'have' is right, the reference is to Lear, Gloucester and Kent."

QUESTIONS
AND
ANSWERS

Questions and Answers

Q. 1. "To save, in some degree, the honour of human nature, Shakespeare never wishes that his spectators should forget that the story takes place in a dreary and barbarous age"—(*Schlegal*). Discuss.

Ans. The story of King Lear and his three daughters belongs to the domain of old romance and popular tradition and it has been told in different forms such as in verse, prose, ballad etc. The observation of Schlegel is quite apt, as the story has 'a dreary and barbarous age" to its background. He has also said in the same context that Shakespeare has reproduced the story of Lear, with all the primitive features, characteristic of the era, to which tradition assigns it. The dramatist "lays particular stress on the circumstance that the Britons of the day were still heathens", although some of the remaining circumstances coincide with the time, that he has chosen. From this point of view, the crudenesses of expression and manners should be judged, *e.g.*, the immodest manner in which Gloucester acknowledges his bastard, Kent's quarrel with Oswald and more particularly the cruelty exercised by the Duke of Cornwall on Gloucester. Even the virtue of honest and upright Kent bears the stamp of "an iron age", wherein both the good and the bad display the same ungovernable strength.

In fact this "iron age" accounts for something still profounder than "the coarsenesses in expression and manners", and brings us face to face with characters that are conscienceless, malignant and ravenous.

What Edmund has said, well applies for the *dramatis personae*—V. iii. 31-32,

> ".........know thou this, that men
> Are as the time is."

The characters of the play fully reflect their age to which they belong. The play is based on the breach of family ties, which makes the play, one full of horrors, envisaging

unnatural cruelty to fathers, brother, sisters by those who should have loved them most.

We know", says Gervinus, "from the authenticated history of the Burgundian and Merovingian houses, that such times and such men did exist, that family horrors, as we read them in "Lear" have abounded for centuries, even among Christian races. Into such times as these Shakespeare has transported us in the most tragic of his tragedies...... The poet places us in the very centre of such an age, and brings actively before us a whole race, endowed with that barbaric strength of passion, in which almost without exception the resistance of reason and conscience over the emotions of passion is powerless or dead...... ..No sting of conscience pricks most of the evil-doers here either before, or during, or after the deed ; no agonised reflection upon consequences restrains from crime ; here is no Hamlet, no Macbeth, with excited fancy, with terrifying powers of imagination, with the tender yearnings of an innate moral nature. These daughters of Lear, this Edmund, this Cornwall, this Oswald, frustrated in their designs, meet death without a symptom of remorse... ......All human nature, in such a generation, goes blindly to extremes."

If there were no Cordelia, no Edgar, in order to "redeem nature from the general curse", we shall have to say, that primitive man, not to say of far from being a little lower than the angels, is not so very much higher than the "dragons of the time."

Q. 2. Where did Shakespeare find the materials for the story 'King Lear' ? What allusions to passing events do you find in it ?

Ans. [See Introduction, under the section dealing with "*The Sources of the Play.*"]

Q. 3. How do you arrive at the date of the composition of the play of "King Lear" ?

Ans. [See Introduction, under the heading "*Dates of the Composition or Publication of 'King Lear'.*"]

Q. 4. "In fine, wherever Shakespeare works on old materials, you will find him not wiping dusted gold, but

extracting gold from dust where none but himself could have made the golden extraction."—(*Campbell*).

In the light of the above statement, discuss fully how Shakespeare dealt with the source materials and also refer to his alteration and their dramatic significance.

Ans. [See Introduction, under the heading "*Sources of the Play*" and also the relevant sub-headings.

Q. 5. Write a critical note on the duration of the action of 'King Lear', with a special reference to P.A. Daniel's theory of Time Analysis.

Ans. [See Introduction under the heading "*Duration of the Action.*"]

Q. 6. "King Lear" is an admirable tragedy—as Shakespeare wrote it : but as it is reformed according to the chemerical notion of poetical justice......it has lost half its beauty."—(Addison.)

Discuss the above statement critically with a special reference to Nahum Tate's adaptation of "King Lear".

Ans. [See Introduction under the heading "*Nahum Tate's Adaptation of 'King Lear'.*"]

Q. 7. Point out and discuss some of the improbabilities and inconsistencies, in "King Lear."

Ans. Shakespeare, no doubt, shows an extraordinary skill in the construction of "King Lear", none the less a punctilious comes across several improbabilities and inconsistencies in the play. According to Bradley, Shakespeare in 'King Lear', "was less concerned than usual with dramatic fitness ; improbabilities inconsistencies, sayings and doings which suggest questions only to be answered by conjecture." Some of the improbabilities, and inconsistencies pointed out by him are as follows :—

(i) Why should Edgar, who lives in the same house, write a letter to his brother Edmund, instead of speaking to him in person, particularly when the letter purports to disrepute himself? We are left without a reason in that regard as well as regarding Gloucester appearing to have no acquaintance with his son's handwriting.

(ii) Is it in character that Edgar should, without the slight-

est hesitation, be persuaded to avoid his father, rather than seeing him instantaneously to ascertain the reasons?

(iii) It seems to be quite improbable that Gloucester, when expelled from his castle, should at all wander painfully on his way to Dover for destroying himself. After Gloucester's attempted suicide, Edgar first talks to him in the language of a gentleman, then to Oswald in his presence in broad peasant dialect, then again to Gloucester in gentle language, and even then Gloucester expresses the least surprise. Is it not something incompatible and extraordinary?

(iv) Only a fortnight seems to have elapsed between the first scene and the breach with Goneril ; yet already there are rumours not only of war between Goneril and Regan but also of the coming of a French army ; and this, Kent says, is perhaps connected with the harshness of both the sisters to their father, though Regan has apparently had no chance of showing any harshness till the day before.

(v) In the quarrel with Goneril, Lear speaks of his having to dismiss fifty of his knights "at a clap", still she has neither mentioned any number, nor had any chance of mentioning it off the stage.

(vi) Lear and Goneril, intending to hurry to Regan, both send their messengers to her, and tell them to bring back an answer. But it does not appear either how the messengers could come back or what answer could be needful, as even their superiors are following them with greatest speed.

(vii) When Edgar truly says he ought to have revealed himself to his father, why should he not do so ? The answer is left to mere conjecture.

(viii) Why does Kent so carefully preserve his incognito till the last scene ? He says that he does it for an important purpose, but what the purpose is we have to guess.

(ix) Why Burgundy, rather than France, should have first choice of Cordelia's hand, is a question which remains without an answer to it.

(x) There is some strange obscurity which overwhelms Edmund's delay in trying to save his victims.

(xi) It seems doubtful whether Shakespeare's failure in giving information about the fate of the Fool was due to any-

thing more than carelessness or an impatient desire to reduce his overloaded material.

Bradley concludes thus:

"......Shakespeare, set upon the dramatic effect of the great scenes and upon certain effects not wholly undramatic, was exceptionally careless of probability, clearness, and consistency in smaller matters, introducing what was convenient or striking for a momentary purpose without troubling himself about anything more than the moment.

Q. 8. Write a critical note on the movement of the play of "King Lear."

Ans. [See Introduction, under the section dealing with *Problems of Construction*.]

Q. 9. Discuss the statement of Schlegel that the function of the underplot in "King Lear" is to universalize the tragedy.

Ans. [See Introduction, under the heading, *Interweaving of the two Plots*."] The following points may also be noted :—

The statement that the underplot in "King Lear" serves "to universalize the tragedy" is quite true. In substantiating this statement Schlegel observes :—

"Were Lear alone to suffer from his daughters, the impression would be limited to the powerful compassion felt by us for his private misfortune."

The happy blending of the two plots does not let this "private misfortune" to remain private, but provides it a universal character, as Schlegel adds in the same context : "... ......two such unheard-off examples taking place at the same time have the appearance of a great commotion in the moral world", and indeed make the picture gigantic. The underplot fulfils this function of universalizing the tragedy in the following ways :

(i) The combination of the two plots enriches the play in regard to its imaginative breadth, and diversity of emotional time.

(ii) Either plot being the foil of the other, the play provides the relief from the strain to the actors as well as audience.

(iii) The underplot is significant, as Edmund's association

with Goneril and Regan brings about an occasion of the nemesis that punishes their cruel treatment to Lear.

(iv) Edmund passing from "one sphere of crime to another" becomes a connecting link between the two plots, so as to combine them into one united whole, providing it a universal character.

(v) It is (as pointed out by Verity) through contact with Edgar's feigned madness, that Lear's mind is completely deranged, through sympathy with Lear that Gloucester suffers: through Gloucester's sufferings, in turn, that Cornwall (who insults Lear and Kent) is punished ; through Edmund, that Cordelia perishes ; through Edgar that Oswald, the abettor of Goneril, fares as he deserves ; and at the last Albany the sole survivor of the one set of characters turns for aid to Edgar, who is the sole survivor of the other set. Really speaking, the characters of the either story reacting on each other make the story "a single living organism."

(v) Besides the dramatic value of the underplot, it repeats the theme of the main story, so that in each we have an old man 'with a white beard', "affectionate, unsuspicious, foolish and self-willed." Each is a victim of "monstrous ingratitude from the child whom he favours and is tortured and driven to death." The repetition, as Bradley says, signifies "that in that dark and cold world some fateful malignant influence is abroad", turning fathers and sons against each other, and smitting the earth with a curse.

Q. 10. Point out some of the salient features of Shakespeare's style, as employed in "King Lear."

Ans. Ben Jonson has called Shakespeare, "applause, delight and wonder of the stage," which shows how his contemporary playwrights held him in high esteem. It is considerably because of his style, endowed with richness and multiplicity, he could be most popular dramatist of his age. There is something inimitable in his style which easily charms the readers, play-goers and actors. Particularly in his tragedies, he takes us to the spiritual heights, confronting us with the vision of sublime, at the same time purging us of the shallowness and superfluities. This results into the deepening of experience, which confirms our assurance in life as against

death, in the powers of light, as against the forces of darkness.

"King Lear" belongs to that great period in Shakespeare's life when he devoted himself in writing tragedies. Right from 1601 and until 1608, he either from choice or of necessity wrote nothing but tragedies. If at all any comedy was written, it bore the impact of gravity. 'King Lear' is the most tragic of all the plays, belonging to this period. Goggin is of the opinion that 'King Lear' "is more terrible than 'Macbeth', wider and more profound in thought than 'Hamlet', sadder and more pathetic than 'Othello'."

The two most significant features of Shakespeare's style are the device of reiteration, and variety and versatility.

(i) **The device of reiteration.** No other play of Shakespeare employs reiteration as technique of style, to the same extent as "King Lear". Reiteration, in fact, is a device that can be artless with the most consummate art, and comes of insight that transcends art. It is this last that is illustrated by Lear's

> "..........Thou'lt come no more,
> Never, never, never, never, never !"

His heart breaks with the truth, and we know it for certain that these words bear a universal significance. Anybody, conditioned like Lear, and in his place, would say the same, as no other words would fit it. They cast but a hypnotic spell on us. Our minds go back to the tossing of "Nothing" between father and daughter in that moment of the first scene which starts the moment that closes with the five times repeated 'Never' :

> *Lear*. What can you say to draw
> A third more opulent than your sister ? speak.
>
> *Cordelia*. Nothing, my Lord.
>
> *Lear*. Nothing ?
>
> *Cordelia*. Nothing.
>
> *Lear*. Nothing will come of nothing ; speak again.

It 'sounds the call for Lear's disaster'. In the end of the scene, he grimly, with an acrimonious apathy, replies Burgundy's proposal to accept Cordelia with a dower.

"Nothing : I have sworn : I am firm."

Already it is a danger-signal. We come presently to the menace of a secondary tragedy, when Edmund is plotting against Edgar. Again this word, this time the voice of hypocrisy :

"*Gloucester*. What paper were you reading ?
Edmund. Nothing, my Lord."

And Gloucester, like Lear, plays on the word which sets his misery, if he knows it in motion.

The intricate use of reiteration may be noticed in how Edmund's mind revals its workings, before it plunges on its fiendish career :

"..........Why brand they us
With base ? with baseness ? bastardy ? base, base ?
....Well then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund—
As to th' legitimate. Fine word 'legitimate' !
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top th' legitimate."

The contempt, implied in the word 'legitimate,' with every repetition, gives a turn to the venomous will to prove the superiority of the bastard. How haughtily does Edmund throw his gauntlets :

"........I grow, I prosper ;
Now, gods, stand up for bastards !"

(ii) **Variety and Versatility :** The middle scenes of "King Lear" particularly those wherein figure Lear, Kent, the Fool, Bedlam beggar, poor Tom and Gloucester, testify to Shakespeare's command over most of the notes in the gamut of the dramatic expression. He can pass from grandeur to graceful simplicity without the hint of a jolt or incongruity. So can he from racking passion to pathos and tearful irony. He switches on from verse to prose, and from prose to snatches of old songs and ballads ; but without the least hint of disharmony. The utmost variety, combined with a subtle harmonizing of tones that is the beauty of Shakespeare's style. About these scenes Granville Barker rightly remarks :

"The dramatic vitality of these scenes lies largely in this variety and balance of orchestration ; their emotional strain would be intolerable without it." In fact the play by its very nature demands, rather persistently, such swift changes of tone. The attention of any audience, as such, would flag on the same key of emotional tension. Shakespeare, with the airy freedom and apparent recklessness of a master, being fully aware of innumerable potentialities of his dramatic medium, bends both verse and prose to his dramatic purpose without sacrificing unity of effect. Dwell for a moment on a passage, which might take but a few seconds in speaking :

"..... ...Spit fire ! spout, rain !
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters :
I tax you not, you elements, with unkindness :
I never gave you kingdom, call'd you children,
You own me no subscription : then let fall
Your horrible pleasure ; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man."

From this fearful sarcasm and self-abusing submission, Lear changes to a sudden upbraiding of the elements :

"That will with two pernicious daughters join
Your high-engender'd battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this."

And suddenly the pitch rises to a shrieking condemnation of their injustice in :

"O, ho ! 'tis foul." Presently the Fool eases the strain with a homely tag and song that brings it all to right earth :

"For there was never yet fair woman but she
made months in a glass."

—which brings Lear to the touching simplicity of :

"No, I will be the pattern of all patience,
I will say nothing."

Not many seconds pass over Kent's vivid description of the storm, when we find, Lear rises to a solemn vein of warning to the "wretches" of the world, who think that they can continue their "undivulged crimes" long and escape the justice of heaven. We pass in a trice to the prophetic adjuration :

"Close pent-up quilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
These dreadful summoners grace."

From this uplifted style, we move towards profundity :

"I am a man more sinned against than sinning."

The words have cast off all outer wrappings and sophistication, very much like Lear's unaccommodated man. When Kent importunes Lear to shelter himself in a hovel, we come across the everyday humanity of

"Come on, my boy. How dost my boy ? Art cold ?
I am cold myself. Where is this straw, my fellow ?"

Which takes us to the heart of the new Lear, more than poetry can. In the next scene, half a dozen undistinguished words, uttered causually, take us deeper still into Lear's chastened spirit : "I ll pray, and then I'll sleep."

Shakespeare thus sounds the unplumbed depths of tragic emotions. The play's wayward flights provide "the necessary balance to the magniloquence of the play's beginning and to the tragic splendour of the storm." The play's swinging motions, from extreme grandeur to extreme simplicity, draw a moving panorama with light and shade of the strange contrasts of human life.

✓ **Q. 11.** Write a note on "the barbaric and pagan atmosphere" of the play "King Lear".

Ans. [See Introduction] and add the following :

Shakespeare never wants his audience to forget that the story of "King Lear" takes place but in a background of a dreary and barbarous age. The opening scene from which the rest of the incidents of the play rise, would be credible only in primitive age. In what other age, a king, passionately susceptible to the demonstration of love, would be ready to deprive himself of the powers of kingdom and thereby sign his own death-warrant ? In what other age an ex-king could be seen in the midst of tumuluous tempest, accompanied by none else except his jester ? Stopford Brooke observes : "All that is said and done arises out of the first uumodified elements of human nature. And this last, is as true—on the other side—of Cordelia's love and Kent's loyalty, as it is of Regan's hard-heartedness and Cornwall's treachery. The good in the play is also of early human nature." It may be doubted

whether the so called civilized nations of today have sufficient resistance of reason and conscience to bestial passions. It is because of the character of the story and the atmosphere that the play takes us to the twilight of a remote age.

The atmosphere of the play is pagan in a pronounced manner. We find Lear in the opening scene itself, swearing by Apollo, by Jupiter, by the sacred radiance of the sun, by

"The Mysteries of Hecate and the night,
By all the operation of the orbs
From whom we exist and cease to be."

He prays to his "dear goddess", Nature, to strike Goneril's womb with sterility. Edmund too, ironically enough, dedicates himself to her services. Cordelia in her most prayerful mood, invokes the "kind gods" to cure the great breach in her father's "abused nature". Gloucester in his agony, finds gods as the wanton and reckless inflictors of atrocities on helpless human beings :

"As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods ;
They kill us for their sport."

Edgar reflecting upon the misfortunes which Edmund brings on his father, attributes the working of nemesis to the gods :

"The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices
Make instruments to plague us."

Thus the stars, nature, gods, the sun and the sacred orbs, Hecate and her mysteries—all govern the lives and fortunes of the persons of the play. Shakespeare, presumably oblivious of the act forbidding the use of 'God' in stage-plays makes Lear speak :

"And take upon us the mystery of things,
As if we were God's spices."

By several references of beasts in the play, the atmosphere begins to reek with savage animal nature. When Edgar describes himself as "false of heart, light of ear, bloody of hand, hog in sloth, fox in stealth, wolf in greediness, dog in madness, lion in prey", Shakespeare has man, and only man in his mind. Bradley observes: " 'The fitchew nor the soiled

horse goes to't with a more riotous appetite,' is Lear's view of man's seusuality............As we read, the souls of all the beasts in turn seem to us to have entered the bodies of these mortals ; horrible in their venom, savagery, lust, deceitfulness. sloth, cruelty, filthiness ; miserable in their feebleness, nakedness, defencelessness, blindness : and man, 'consider him well', is even what they are."

The pervading atmosphere is one of the most elemental and primeval of Shakespeare's tragedies. Muir is of the opinion that the play is not, as some of our grandfathers believed, pessimistic and pagan. The dramatist goes back to a pre-Christian world and builds up from the nature of man himself, and not from revealed religion, those same moral and religious ideas, that were being undermined by the new philosophy. J. C. Maxwell, convincingly observes: "King Lear is a Christian play about a pagan world." That, Shakespeare can assume in his audience a different religious standpoint from that of any of his characters, gives him a peculiar freedom and makes it possible for him to deck the play with an unusual complexity and richness.

Q. 12. Write a note on Shakespeare's method of dialogue with special reference to "King Lear."

Ans. Shakespeare's period of writing great tragedies is one of varied and delightful ease. "Othello" is great on account of its sustained melodies. In "Macbeth" we come across passages that wield a sort of secret sway. "Antony and Cleopatra" has ease and breath for its normal virtues. The qualities that distinguish the writing of 'King Lear', which in itself is the product of the matter and nature of the play, are rare to be found. The dialogue of "King Lear" is a happy blending of freedom and power. Shakespeare's success lies in a great variety of expression. "Witness such a seemingly haphazard mixture," says Granville Barker, "of verse, prose and snatches of song as we find in the scenes between Lear, Kent, Gloucester, the Fool and poor Tom. Yet the dramatic vitality of these scenes lies largely in this variety and balance of orchestration ; their emotional strain might be intolerable without it."

The characters themselves are endowed with imaginative quality in "King Lear". Shakespeare, strongly enough, seeks

strength through simplicity. It may be marked how broken is the eloquence of Lear's appeal to Regan :

> ".........No, you unnatural hags,
> I will have such revenges on you both
> That all the world shall—I will do such things,
> What they are, yet I know not, but they shall be
> The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep ;
> No, I'll not weep :
> I have a full cause of weeping, but this heart
> Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
> Or ere I'll weep." (II. iv. 280—288).

Here, we would readily say that the "verse is reduced to its very elements." Granville Barker observes that Lear betrayed and helpless at an end of his command of self or circumstance is dramatically set above the tyranny and logic of both, by being made one with the storm, and by his harmonizing with the homely fantasies of the Fool and the mad talk of Bedlam beggar, until the moment when his own "noble anger" breaks the bounds of reason. This action and these characters, without some "anchorage" in simplicity, would range so wide that human interpretation could hardly compass them. Lear wins our sympathy on account of his recurrent coming down from the heights to moments such as these :

> "No, I will be the pattern of all patience ;
> I will say nothing."

and

> "My wits begin to turn
> Come on, my boy. How dost my boy ? Art cold ?
> I am cold myself. Where is this traw, my fellow ?

and

> "Make no noise, make no noise : draw the curtains :
> so, so, so,
> We'll go to supper i' the morning so, so, so."

This final stroke reveals to us the simplest physical actualities ; Lear's defiance of the elements has flickered dowd to a mock pulling of the curtain round his bed. The device of reiteration is a very strong and effective means, employed by Shakespeare throughout the play. In the opening scene mark the nse of nothing :

Lear. What can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters ? speak.

Cordelia. Nothing, my Lord.

Lear. Nothing.

Cor. Nothing.

Lear. Nothing will come of nothing : speak again."

It 'sounds the call for Lear's disaster.' In the end of the scene, Lear grimly answers Burgundy's proposal to accept Cordelia with a dowry :

"Nothing : I have sworn, I am firm."

Already it is a danger signal. But, then, we come presently to the menace of a secondary tragedy, when Edmund is executing his crooked designs against his noble and innocent brother, Edgar : the word once again recurs :

Glou. What paper were you reading ?
Edm. Nothing, my Lord.

This device of reiteration reveals the workings of Edmund's mind, before it plunges on its fiendish career : Edmund says :

"Why brand they us
With base ? with baseness ? bastardy ? base, base ?
...............Well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land.
Our father's love is to the bastard, Edmund,
As to the legitimate : fine word – legitimate !
Well, my legitimate, if this letter speed,
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate."

The reiteration of "legitimate" does much to drive in on us the persistent venomous will and the malice of Edmund. Gloucester's grief finds an outlet through the refrain :

"O madam, my old heart is crack'd, is crack'd...
O lady, shame would have it hid......
I know not, madam ; 'tis too bad, too bad."

Then we come across Lear's

"Howl, howl, howl, howl ! O, you are men of stones."

nd his :

"Thou'lt come no more,
Never, never, never, never, never !"

The very sound of this echoing "never" can make us

participants in Lear's helplessness and despair. It leaves us as Bradley says "on the topmost of poetry." If we cut it from the context, it sounds absurd, but apart from the action it implies the dramatic poetry is never meant to be judged.

Q. 13. 'Lear is essentially impossible to be represented on the stage." Discuss.

Ans. [See Introduction under the heading " 'King Lear' on the Stage."]

Q. 14. Is it character destiny in "King Lear" or do you regard it as pessimistic and fatalistic ? Give your considered views on the subject with particular reference to Shakespeare's conception of tragedy.

Ans. Shakespeare was a profound thinker and his mind was always haunted by the enigma of Evil in the world. Why do people, who are incorrigibly iniquitous grow from strength to strength ? Why is it that so many good souls, caught into the snares of the wicked' perish without adequate compensation ? Why, again, is human greatness bound up with that infirmity or foible, which drags it down into the dust ? How is it that in the incessant struggle between Light and Darkness, the friends of Light are ruthlessly ousted so often ? It is as though Providence carved but a pin's head about protecting them from the disaster. What an incalculable wastage of transcendent human excellence and heroism in this battle !

They are eternal riddles and no philosopher has ever been able to solve them. Shakespeare had to work on these riddles embodying the facts in his tragedies. He bade good-bye to the sunny uplands of laughter and gaiety, and now plunges into the dark underworld of crime and punishment, passion and temptation, terror, madness and remorse.

Shakespeare's vision in the tragedies is so clear that false idealism, cynicism or pessimism connot blur and distort it. He points to no metaphysical consolation, or compensation beyond the grave. "He sees nothing loftier than the human hope ; nothing deeper than the human heart," said Hazlitt of Wordsworth, but these words seem to be truer of Shakespeare than of Wordsworth. Shakespearean tragedy is the story of exceptional calamity leading to the death of a man in high state. This

view is propounded by Bradley, who further says : "Its final and total result is one in which pity and terror, carried perhaps to the extreme limits of art, are so blended with a sense of law and beauty that we feel at last, not depression and much less despair, but a consciousness of greatness in pain, and of solemnity in the mystery we cannot fathom."

The tragedy presents to us an enigma—a game which Destiny and Passion play on the chess-board of life with human hearts for pawns. No kindly Providence comes to rescue the penitent in his hour of peril. But the Evil in tragedy is barren, a principle of self-destruction. The villain is always caught in the very engine, he devises for others. The hero meets his catastrophe on account of a flaw in his own character.

The dictum "character is destiny" in case of Shakespearean tragedies is the exaggeration of a vital truth. Besides the flaw of the hero, another subordinate factor, *viz.*, Fate or chance also works. The hero's failing does not prove fatal in ordinary circumstances, but when he is placed in a situation which demands the very quality he lacks, it proves fatal. Besides at a critical moment accident helps the villain ensuring success to his plot. In "Othello", Desdemona drops the handkerchief just when Iago wants the thing to happen. "In "King Lear", the storm sets in just when Lear flings out of Gloucester's castle ; and later, the reprieve arrives just too late to save Cordelia. So in the tragedies, is discernible a close bond in between character and course of action, but then accident also plays a part, however subservient it might be. Character does not hold the helm all the way in place of Destiny, at some stretches of the voyage, Destiny takes charge. In "King Lear" as well as in "Othello", the tragedy is the result of the interaction of the following four elements- (i) the villain ; (ii) a defect or failing in the room, *i.e.*, fatal flaw ; (iii) exceptional goodness in the protagonist ; and (iv) Fate.

Without these four elements and their interaction there would have been no tragedy.

The great martyrs for truth and conscience from Socrates to Nurse Cavell, preferred death to life at the price of the divine in them. So Cordelia, Desdemona, and Emilia seem to agonize and perish because of their sovereign goodness—not because of their electronic faults invited disaster and

made it logically necessary. There is no poetic justice. Consider the capricious dealing of a Destiny with Kent, Edgar, Cardelia, the Fool and the true-hearted retainers of Cornwall. Can it be said that in each of these cases the career and the end were just what they deserved ? In case of Othello, Hamlet, Lear, and Gloucester, what a monstrous disproportion is perceptible in between the flaw and the catastrophe ! That, they are more sinned against than sinning cannot be gainsaid.

Contrast the fortunes of Edgar and Cordelia. For the same virtue one is hanged, while the other gains his earldom. Their are critics who think her death to be the logical consequence of her want of foresight in invading England with an army led by the Marshal, instead of by the king himself. But was it her fault that the King of France was prevented by matters of state from accompanying her ? Was it her fault that she, moved by the one and only thought of saving her father, showed a divine recklessness of her own safety ? Had her army been adequate and the King of France accompanied her, would she not have succeeded ? But then, why does chance interfere in the tragedy ? The entire realm of life in the matter of reward and chastisement, present a scene of the wildest caprice and this is clearly reflected in Shakespearean tragedy. The playwright puts into Lear's mouth :

> "Upon such sacrifices, Cordelia,
> The gods, themselves, throw incense."

In her sublime self-devotion, Cordelia is a hundred times nobler than what she would have been by prudently remaining in France at the moment, when in England her father's miserable plight clamoured for her presence. "There are sufferings that exalt and deaths that canonize."

Is "King Lear" pessimistic ? 'Pessimistic', this seems to be the ultimate and the total impression, left by the play on the minds of the audience. Upto a certain point—"pessimistic" is a true description for the world of King Lear is one in which, more than in any other of Shakespeare's tragedies, gross evil is rife and potent—goodness rare and unavailing.

This impression' however, is qualified by two vital considerations : (i) The victory of evil is temporary. Evil in Shakespearean tragedy is self-destructive ; and (ii) The defeat

of good leaves us with the feeling that there are worse things than this defeat, and that it is not the last word.

In "King Lear", the five characters, who conspicuously embody evil come to a speedy and miserable end. It may, however, be noticed that in two of them evil wages war on evil. Bradley observes : "Good, in the widest sense, seems thus to be the principle of life and health in the world ; evil, at least in these worst forms, to be a poison." The world violently reacts against evil, and in the process of struggling to expel it, is driven to devastate itself. Then why should the world at all, generate that which convulses and wastes it ? The tragedy leaves us without an answer, and "we are trying to go beyond tragedy in seeking one. But the world, in this tragic picture, is convulsed by evil, and rejects it."

Wherein does the real defeat of good lie ? It would be if the character, to whom our sympathy has gone out, has saved his life but lost his soul. If, for example, Cordelia had not come to her father's rescue ? Hence, Shakespeare wants us to be familiar with the paradox, which is the only truth : that nothing material can touch the just man. Thus Shakespearean tragedy is far from being pessimistic. It never shows extreme evil triumphant, nor doe it leads us to believe that a struggle against it is not worthwhile. "Evil in Shakespearean tragedy," observes Stoll, "is neither negative nor incident ; but while under suffering it may grow worse as in Macbeth, good, on the other hand, may grow better as in Lear". The good in the long run, is neither triumphed nor overshadowed by evil. If, on one side, there are Goneril, Regan, and Cornwall, Edmund and Oswald, on the other, there are Lear, Cordelia and the Fool, Kent, Gloucester, Edgar, Albany and the true-hearted retainers and servants. Thus "if many people do ill by those who have done well by them, many others do well by those who have done ill by them."

Shakespeare's "King Lear" gives us a clearer vision than any of his other tragedies, of the moral heights to which man can ascend through suffering and patience, renunciation and forgiveness. That the worldly power and prosperity are but insignificant is abundantly made clear by the play. "It is on the renunciation of them." Bradley observes, "that the gods throw incense. They breed lust, pride, hardness of heart, the insolence of office, cruelty, scorn, hypocrisy, contention,

war, murder, self-destruction. The whole story beats this indictment of prosperity into our brain ....."

Adversity in this world of ours, wins fragrance from the crushed flowers. It melts in aged hearts compassion which prosperity had frozen. It purges the soul's sight by blinding that of the eye. Throughout the stupendous Act III, the good are seen growing better through suffering, and the bad worse through success. The wasm castle is but a room in hell, while the storm-swept heath a sanctuary. What a strange world! Its judgment is a lie; its good which we covet, corrupts us; but to the contrary, its ills which break our bodies, set our souls free:

"Our means secure us, our mere defects
Prove our commodities."

That which is real in this world is "the soul, with its courage, patience, devotion. And nothing outward can touch it."

Q. 15. "If Lear is to be saved and to pass the remainder of his days in happiness, the whole play loses its signification." (Shlegel). Discuss.

Ans [See Introduction under the heading "The Ending of the Play."]

Q. 16. "The Progress of Lear's insanity is represented with the closest fidelity to nature." (Dr. I. Ray). Discuss this statement showing the phenomenal development of Lear's insanity.

Ans. [See Introduction.]

Q. 17. Lear has been described as a "passionate irritable and exacting old man." In the light of this remark, give an estimate of Lear's character.

Ans. [See Introduction.]

Q. 18. The Fool "provides not so much comic relief as a safety-valve for the emotions of the audience."—(Kenneth Muir). Discuss.

Ans. [See Introduction], and add the following:—

It may rightly be said that in Shakespeare's rich gallery of

fools, the Fool in "Lear" is the grandest and most *tragic*. Franz Horn is prepared to believe that the Fool as more sense than all the rest of the men in the play put together. His disposition is truly noble as well as lovable. No one can more accurately perceive the drawbacks and follies of the old King, fast growing childish, than he, but no one can cherish towards him a more faithful love. The bitter speeches that he makes, should not in the least surprise us, for it is his office. We may be sure that he, the wise Fool, knows that in such terrible sufferings as those of the old king, a momentary annoyance is a sort of relief ; at all events, far more easily borne than a state of constant depression.

Muir is right when he observes that the Fool "provides not so much comic relief as safety-valve for the emotions of the audience." Indeed to the emotionally over-strained audience, the gibe and witty remarks of the Fool work as a safety-valve. Their strain is relieved in a way which is altogether harmless. The Fool appears to them the noblest of Shakespeare's creations. "He is by far the most intellectual and noblest of his fools", says Wilhelm Oechelhauser. Two prevailing currents of feeling are found to be conspicuous in Fool. The first in his grief over Cordelia, to whom he is as faithful as a dog. "Since my young lady's going into France, the Fool hath much pined away." This grief is expressed by the merciless blows which, far exceeding his traditional privilege, heals at the King for his folly in abdicating his crown and for his lack of just appreciation of the innocent Cordelia. If it were not this motive, we should hold the Fool to be hard-hearted and malicious.

With increasing misfortune of the old King, it may be watched, that the tone of the Fool undergoes a change : sympathy with his master gives another direction to his mind, and sweetens his bitterness. With his anxiety for his unhappy lord, he meets him in that terrible night on the heath, and we find him incessantly "labouring to outjest his heart-struck injuries." Any endeavour to support this role by nonsensical mimicry should cease, as the part is sustained by its own intellectual power. It is much better that the Fool is represented by an elderly man. The reason is that the speeches of Fool bear the stamp of the biting irony which is not an acquired thing, but which comes with age in one whose

humble station does not correspond with his intellectual abilities. The effect of this role would remarkably be increased, if in the stormy night the mask of the Fool is allowed ever more and more to fall off and the sad, faithful servant becomes more and more prominent, as in this scene, the surroundings of the unhappy king must render the sympathy and concern of the Fowl more lively. "With this scene, alas! the Fool vanishes from the stage!"

Q. 19. Hudson says of Cordelia, "Formed for all sympathies, moved by all tenderness, prompt for all duty, prepared for all suffering. We seem almost to hear sighs and feel her breath as she hangs like a ministering spirit, over the reviving father." Discuss.

Ans. [See Introducrion.]

Q. 20. "Kent is the nearest to perfect goodness of all Shakespeare's characters, and yet the most individualized."—(Coleridge). Comment on this statement, and give briefly an estimate of Kent's character.

Ans. [See Introduction.]

Q. 21. "The two unnatural daughters are alike personifications of cruelty and ingratitude."—(Goggin). Discuss the statement aud bring out the contrast in between Goneril and Regan.

Ans. [See Introduction.]

Q. 22. "In Edgar we have a character in some respects as grand as that of Kent, though perhaps hardly as unselfish and lovable."—(Deighton). Discuss.

Ans. [See Introduction.]

Q. 23. Write a note on the dramatic irony in "King Lear."

Ans. Dramatic irony is a form of contrast It often happens that what is being said or done on the stage has one meaning for the agents (*i.e.*, the persons of the play) concerned and another for the spectators who know something which the characters do not know. The device on the part of the dramatist, producing two points of views, is called dramatic irony. It consists in the use of words by a speaker conveying to the audience, in addition to their own ostensible meaning, another and an omnious one hidden from himself, which the audience

can read into the words, either at the moment they are uttered or later on in retrospect. Sometimes the secondary meanings may be concealed from the person to whom they are addressed; and sometimes it may be concealed from the speaker as well as the other characters of the stage, while it may be evident to the audience. Dramatic irony may be divided into three kinds : The use of words by a speaker (i) whose secondary and omnious sense is hidden from himself, but is clear to the audience ; (ii) whose secondary meaning is hidden from the audience at the moment when they are spoken. but becomes clear in retrospect ; and (iii) whose secondary sense is hidden from the character, whom the speaker addresses. Sophocles made frequent use of the first two kinds and hence they are termed "Sophoclean irony," after him.

"King Lear" begins with Sophoclean irony. Kent describes the issue of Gloucester's early liaison as 'so proper,' and Gloucester anticipates Edmund's end with :

"He hath been out nine years, and away he shall again."

It is even during the first scene that we have the first of the ironlc premonitions of Lear's insanity :

"........Be Kent unmannerly
When Lear is mad."

and later we find Lear, himself, apprehensive of its approach:

"O ! let me not be mad, not mad, sweet heaven !
Keep me in temper ; I would not be mad." (I. v. 44-45.)

and "I prithee, daughter, do not make me mad." (II. iv. 220.)
and "O fool ! I shall go mad." (II. iv. 289.)
and "That way madness lies." (III. iv. 22.)

It may be noticed that Lear has not even the faintest inkling that he will soon be driven to curse Regan, too,—but the audience is well aware of the entire situation—when he tells her :

"No, Regan, thou shalt never have my curse :
The tender-hefted nature shall not give
Thee o'er to rashness." (II. iv. 171-73.)

No more does poor Gloucester foresee the omnious meaning that his words will presently take when he speaks to Regan and Cornwall :

"Because I would not see thy cruel nails
Pluck out his poor old eyes" (III. vii. 56-57.)

Its dark significance strikes the reader but only in retrospect. When a terrible blindness to the characters of Edgar and Edmund and to the perverse turn of events does Gloucester show in :

> "All dark and comfortless. Where's my son, Edmund ?
> Edmund, enkindle all the sparks of nature
> To quit this horrid act." (III. vii. 96-88)

Q. 24. What is the moral problem, dramatized in "King Lear"?

Ans. "Poetry is the chemistry of human life, and the theatre is the moral laboratory," says Richard G. Moulton.* Just as the physicist supplements observation by experiment, setting up artificial combinations of forces in order that he may watch these working out to a natural issue, so it is the high function of the story in a drama to initiate some special situation of character and circumstances pregnant with moral suggestiveness ; the course of the story then follows the situation as in the nature of things it unfolds itself and reaches a point of satisfaction, the initial doubt satisfied, the initial perplexity resolved into clearness. The Shakespearean drama may be said to abound in these moral problems dramatized. Sometimes, the situation which constitutes the problem seems to arise casually in the course of human affairs. In other cases, even within the story itself, there may be traces of contrivance and design to set up a pregnant situation ; the problem then becomes, in the fullest sense, an experiment in morals.

Take the case of "King Lear." The entire plot may be analytically examined from this point of view. When Lear, at a check from Cordelia, suddenly overturns the carefully arranged division of the kingdom, we have imperious passion overthrowing conscience (represented in the interference of Kent), and setting up an unnatural distribution of power : power being taken from the good (Cordelia) and lodged in the hands of the bad (Goneril and Regan).

This situation of unstable moral equilibrium, thus set up, makes the problem : for its solution we trace three interests side by side in the sequel of events : (i) We have the nemesis upon the wrong-door ; a double nemesis, for Lear receives only

*The answer is based on Moulton's "*Shakespeare As a Dramatic Thinker*," (ed. 1916), pp. 141-43.

ill from the daughters unjustly exalted, only good from Cordelia whom he has injured, (ii) in the sufferings of the innocent Cordelia and Kent, we see a second consequence, of Lear's wrong, and (iii) the third consequence we note in the adulterous intrigues of Goneril and Regan, how power in the hands of the evil is used by them only to work out their own destruction.

The problem as thus stated is duplicated in the underplot: in the family of Gloucester, a father is misled into an unnatural distribution of power : power being wrongfully taken from the good (Edgar) and assigned to the bad (Edmund) ; there is the same triple series of consequences—the double nemesis on the wrong-doer, the sufferings of the innocent, the unrighteous exaltation used by Edmund for the intrigues in which he meets his doom. Again, the special interest of the court-fool, introduced into this play, serves to emphasize a plot of this kind ; it is just where Lear's suffering at the hands of his daughters might divert our sympathies into a different channel that the jester's part, with its strange compound of idle fooling with home thrusts of rebuke, comes to keep before us the idea that Lear is only meeting the solution of the problem his own rash act has set up.

One more interest completes the plot of "Lear". Though the underplot is a duplication of the main plot, yet there is a difference of spirit between the two. When Lear would sin, conscience strongly embodied in Kent starts up to hinder ; in the case of Gloucester there is no such restraining power, but on the contrary, the strong Edmund is a force tempting and leading his too credulous father on to his fatal error. Thus in the dim background of the story is suggested one of the fundamental problems of the moral world : how there are two types of sinners, those whose environment is a restraining force like an embodied conscience, and those on the contrary whose whole surrounding make one embodied temptation. The wider problem is merely touched ; something however of solution is hinted when we note how the tempter who misleads Gloucester is the offspring of illicit amour, so announced by Gloucester at the beginning of the play in a tone of unrepenting levity : the fruits of the former sins are seen to make the temptation of the future.

APPENDIX A

Holinshed's Narrative of King Lear

1. Holinshed : Chronicle (1574), Book II. Ch. 5 and 6.

Leir the sonne of Baldud was admitted ruler ouer the Britaine in the yeare of the world 3105, at what times Joas reigned as yet in Juda. This Leir was a prince of right noble demeanor, gouerning his land and subjects in great wealth. He made the towne of Cealier, now called Leicester, which standeth vpon the riuer of Sore. It is written that he had by his wife three daughters without other issue, whose names were Gonorilla, Regan and Cordeilla, which daughters he greatly loued, but specially Cordilla the youngest farre aboue the two elder.

When this Leir therefore was come to great yeeres, and began to waxe unweldie through age, thought to vnderstand the affections of his daughters towards him, and preferre hir whome he best loued, to the succession ouer the kingdom. Whervpon he first asked Gonorilla the eldest, how well she loued : who calling hir gods to record, protested that she loued him more than hir owne life, which by right and reason should be more deer vnto hir. With which answer the father being well pleased, tourned to the second, and demanded of hir how well she loued him : who answered (confirming hir saiengs with great othes) that she loued him more than toung could express, and farre aboue all other creatures of the world.

Then called he his yoongest daughter Cordeilla before him, and asked of hir what account she made of him, vnto whome she made this answer as followeth : "Knowing the great loue and fatherlie zeal that you haue alwaies borne towards me (for the which I maie not answer you otherwise than I thinke, and as my conscience leadth me) I protest vnto you, that I have loued you euer, and will continuallie (while I

liue) loue you as my natural father. And if you would more vnderstand of thė loue that I beare you, assertaine yourselfe, that so much as you haue, so much you are woorth, and so much I loue you, and no more." The father being nothing content with this answere, married his two eldest daughters, the one vnto Henninus, the duke of Cornewall, and the other vntn Maglanus, the duke of Albania, betwixt whome he willed and ordeined that his land should be diuided after his death, and the one halfe thereof immediatelie should be assigned to them in hand : but for the third daughter Cordellia he reserued nothing.

Nevertheless it fortuned that of the princes of *Gallia* (which now is called France) whose name was Aganippus, hearing of the beautie, womanhood and good conditions of the said Cordeilla, desired to haue hir in marriage, and sent ouer to hir father, requiring that he might haue hir to wife : to whome answere was made, that he might haue his daughter, but as for anie dower he could haue none for all was promised and assured to hir other sisters already. Aganippus notwithstanding this answer of deniall to receiue anie thing by way oi dower with Cordeilla, tooke hir to wife, onlie moued thereto (I saie) for respect of hir person and amiable vertues. This Aganippus was one of the twelue kings that ruled Gallia in those daies as in the British historie it is recorded. But to proceed.

After that Leir was fallen into age, the two dukes that had married his two eldest daughters, thinking it long yer the gouernment of the land did come to their hands, arose against him in armour, and reft from him the gouernance of the land, vpon conditions to be continued for terme of life : by the which he was put to his portion, that is, to line after a rate assigned to him for the maintenance of his estate, which in processe of time was diminished as well by Maglanus as by Henninus. But the greatest griefe that Leir tooke, was to see the vnkindness of his daughters, which seemed to thinke that all was too much their father had, the same being neuer so little : in so muche that going from the one to the other, he was brought to that miserie, that scarslie they would him allow one seruante to wait vpon him.

In the end, such was the vnkindnesse, or (as I maie saie) the vnnaturalnesse which he found in his two daughters, notwith-

standing their faire and pleasant words vttered in time past, that being constreined of necessitie, he fled the land, and sailed into Gallia, there to seeke some comfort of his youngest daughter Cordeilla, whom before time he hated. The ladie Cordeilla hearing that he was arriued in poore estate, she first sent to him priuilie a certeine summe of monie to apparell himself withall, and to reteine a certeine number of seruantes that might attende vpon him in honorable wise, as apperteined to estate which he had borne : and then so accompanied, pointed him to come to the court, which he did, and was fullie, honorablie, and louinglie receiued, both by his sonne in law Aganippus, and also by his daughter Cordeilla, that his hart was greatlie comforted : for he was no lesse honored, than if he had beene king of the whole countrie himselfe.

Now when he had informed his sonne in law and his daughter in what sort he had beene used by his other daughters Aganippus caused a mightie armie to be put in a readiness, and likewise a great nauie of ships to be rigged, to passe ouer into Britaine with Leir his father in law, to see him againe restored to his kingdome. It was accorded, that Cordeilla should also go with him to take possession of the land, the which he promised to leaue vnto hir, as the rightfull inheritour after his decesse, notwithstanding any former grant made to hir sisters or to their husbands in anie manner of wise.

Herevpon, when this armie and nauie of ships were readie, Leir and his daughter Cordeilla with her husband tooke a the sea, and arriuing in Britaine fought with their enimies, and discomfited them in battel, in the which Maglanus and Henninus were slaine : and then was Leir restored to his Kingdome, died, he ruled after this by the space of two yeeres, and then which fortie yeeres after he first began to reigne. His bodies buried at Leicester in a vault vnder the chanell of the riuer of Sore beneath the towne.

Cordeilla the yoongest daughter of Leir was admitted Queen and supreme gouerness of Britaine in the yeere of the world 3155, before the bylding of Rome 54 ; Uzia as then reigning in Juda, and Jeroboam ouer Israell. This Cordeilla after her fathers deceasse ruled the land of Britaine right worthilie during the space of fiue yeeres, in which meane time hir husband died, and then about the end of those fiue yeeres, hir two

nephewes Margan and Cunedag, sonnes to hir aforesaid sisters, disdaining to be vnder the gouernment of a woman, leuied warre against hir, and destroied a great part of the land, and finallie tooke hir prisoner, and laid hir fast in ward, wherewith she tooke suche griefe, being a woman of a manlie courage, and despairing to recoure libertie, there she slue hirselfe, when she had reigned (as before is mentioned) the terme of fiue yeeres.

II. Higgins : The Mirror for Magistrates, 1574.

6. My grandsire Baldnd hight, that found the bathes by skill,
A fethered King that practis'd high to soare :
Whereby he felt the fall, God wot against his will,
And neure went, road raygnd, nor spake, nor flew no more
After whose death my father Leire therefore
Was chosen King, by right apparent heire,
Which after built the towne of Leircestere.

7. He had three daughters faire, the first hight Gonerell,
Next after her his younger Ragan was begot :
The third and last was I the yongest, nam'd Cordell.
Vs all our father Leire did loue too well, God wot.
But minding her that lou'd him best to note,
Because hee had no sonne t' enjoy his land,
Hee thought to guerdon most whose favour most he fand.

8. What though I youngest were, yet men me iudg'd more wise
Than either Gonerell or Ragan more of age,
And fairer forer : wherefore my sisters did despise
My grace and giftes, and sought my wrecks to wage.
But yet though vice on vertue dye with rage,
It cannot keepe her vnderneath to drowne :
For still she flittes aboue, and reaps renowne.

9. My father thought to wed vs vnto princely peeres.
And vnto them and theirs deuide and part the land :
For both my sisters first he call'd (as first their yeeres
Requir'd), their minds, and loue, and fauoure t' vnderstand
(Quoth hee) all doubtes of duty to aband,
I must assay your friendly faithes to proue ;
My daughters, tell me how you doe me loue.

10. Which when they aunswered him they lou'd their father more
Than they themselues did loue, or any worldly wight,

He praised then, and sayd he would therefore
The louing kindnesse they deseru'd in fine requite.
So found my sisters fauour in his sight,
By flattery faire they win their fathers heart;
Which after turned hym and me to smart.

11. But not content with this, he asked me likewise
If I did not him loue and honour well.
No case (quoth I) there is I should your grace despise;
For nature so doth binde, and duty me compell
T' loue you, as I ought my father, well.
Yet shortly I may chaunce, if Fortune will,
To finde in heart to beare another more good will.

12. Thus much I sayd of nuptiall loues that ment,
Not minding once of hatred vile or ire;
And partly tazing them, for which intent
They set my fathers heart on wrathfull fire.
"Shee neuer shall to any part aspire
Of this my realme (quoth he) among'st you twayne;
But shall without all dowrie aie remaine."

13. Then to Maglaurus Prince, with Albany he gaue
My sister Gonerell, the eldest of vs all;
And eke my sister Ragan to Hinniue to haue,
And for her dowrie Camber and Cornwall.
These after him should haue his Kingdom all:
Between them both he gaue it franke and gree;
But nought at all hee gaue of dowrie mee.

14. At last it chaunts a Prince of Fraunce to heare my fame:
My beauty braue, my wit was blaz'd abroad ech where.
My noble vertues prais'd me to my fathers blame,
Who did for flattery me lesse friendly fauour beare.
Which when this worthy Prince (I say) did heare,
He sent ambassage, lik'd me more than life,
And soone obtayned me to bee his wife.

15. Prince Aganippus reau'd me of my woe.
And that for vertues sake, of dowryes all the best:
So I contented was to Fraunce my father fro
For to depart, and hoapt t' enio some greater rest.
Where liuing well belou'd, my ioyes encreast;
I gate more fauour in that Princie his sight,
Then euer Princesse of a Princely wight.

16. But while that I these joyes so well enjoy'd in Fraunce,
My father Leire in Britaine waxt unweldie old ;
Whereon his daughters more themselves aloft t' aduance
Desir'd the Realme to rule it as they wold.
Their former loue and friendship waxed cold.
Their husbands rebeals voyde of reason quite
Rose up, rebeld, bereft his crowne and right :

17. Caus'd him agree they might in parts equall
Deuide the Realme, and promist him a gard
Of sixty Knights on him attending still at call.
But in six monthes such was his hap so hard,
That Gonerell of his retinue hard
The halfe of them, she and her husband reft :
And scarce allow'd the other halfe they left.

18. Eke as in Albany lay hee lamenting fates,
When as my sister so sought all his vtter spoyle ;
The meaner vpstart courtiers thought themselues his mates,
His daughter him disdayn'd and forced not his foyle.
Then was he fayne for succovre his to toyle
With halfe his trayne to Gornwall, there to lie
In greatest neede, his Regans loue to try.

19. So when hee came to Cornwall, shee with ioy
Receiued him and Prince Maglaurus did the like.
There he abode a yeare and liu'd without anoy :
But then they tooke all his retinue from his quite
Saue only ten, and shed him daily spite ;
Which he bewayl'd complayning durst not striue,
Though in disdayne they last alow'd but fiue.

20. What more despite could deuelish beasts deuise,
Then ioy their fathers woefull days to see ?
What vipers vile could so their King despise,
Or so vinkinde, so curst socruell bee?
From thence agayn he want to Albany,
Where they bereau'd his seruantes all saue one ;
Bad him content him selfe with that, or none.

21. Eke at what time he ask'd of them to haue his gard,
To gard his noble grace where so hee went :
They call'd him doting foole, all his requests debard,
Demaunding if with life he were not well content :

Then he too late his rigour did repent
Gaynst me, my sisters, fawning loue that knew,
Found flattery false, that seem'd so faire in vew.

22. To make it short, to Fraunce he came at last to me,
And told mee how my sisters ill their father vsde.
Then humbly I besought my noble King so free,
That he would aide my father thus by his abusde:
Who nought at all my humble hest refusde.
But sent to euery coast of France for aide.
Whereby King Leire might home bee well conueyde.

23. The souldiours gathered from ech quarter of the land
Came at the length to know the noble Princes will:
Who did commit them vnto captayness euery band
And I likewise of loue and reuerent meere good will
Desir'd my Lord, he would not take it ill
If I departed for a space with all,
To take a part, or ease my father's thrall.

24. He granted my request: Thence we arriued here.
And of our Britaynes came to aide likewise his right
Full many subjects, good and stout that were:
By martial feats, and force, by subjects sword and might,
The British Kings were fayne to yeeld our right:
Which wonne, my father well this Realme did guide
Three yeeres in peace, and after that he dyde.

APPENDIX C

III. Spencer : Faerie Queene, Book II, Canto X, 27-32.

27. Next him king Leyr in happie peace long raynd,
But had no issue male him to succeed,
But three faire daughters, which were well u)tained
In all that seemed fitt for kingly seed ;
Mongst whom his realme he equally decreed
To have divided. Tho, when feeble age
Nigh to his utmost date he saw proceed,
He cald his daughters, and with speeches sage
Inquyrd, which of them most did love her parentage.

28. The eldest, Gonoril!, gan to protest,
That she much more than her owne life him lov'd ;
And Regan greater loue to him profest
Then all the world, whenever it were proov'd ;
But Cordeill said she lov'd him as behoov'd :
Whose simple answere, wanting colours fayre
To paint it forth, him to displeasaunce, moov'd,
That in his crowne he counted her no hayre,
But twixt the other twaine his kingdom whole did shayre.

29. So wedded th' one to Maglan King of Scottes,
And th' to the King of Cambria,
And twixt them shayrd his realme by equall lottes ;
But without dowere the wise Cordelia
Was sent to Aggannip of Celtica.
Their aged syre, thus eased of his crowne,
A private life led in Albania
With Gonorill, long had in great renowne,
That nought him griev'd to beene from rule deposed downe.

30. But it is that, when the oyle is spent,
The light goes out, and weeke is throwne away ;
So when he had resignd his regiment,
His daughter gan despise his drouping day,

And wearie was for his continuall stay.
Tho to his daughter Regan he repayrd,
Who him at first well used every way ;
But when of his departure she despayrd,
Her bountie she abated, and his cheare empayrd.

31. The wretched man gan then avise too late,
That love is not where most it is profest ;
Too truely tryde in his extremest state,
At last resolv'd likewise to prove the rest,
He to Cordelia him selfe addrest.
Who with entyre affection him receav'd,
As for her Syre and King her seemed best,
And after all an army strong she leav'd,
To war on those which him had of his realme bereav'd.

32. So to his crowne she him restor'd againe,
In which he dyde, made ripe for death by eld,
And after will it should to her remaine ;
Who peaceably the same long time did weld
And all means hearts in dew obedience held ;
Till that her sisters children, woxen strong,
Through proud ambition against her rebeld.
And overcommon kept in prision long.
Till weary of that wretched life her selfe she hong.

APPENDIX D

The following is the passage in Sidney's Arcadia' on which the under-plot is founded—

Sidney : *Arcadia*, *Book II.*

The pitifull state, and storie of the Paphlagonian unkinde King, and his kind soone, first related by the son, then by the blind father.

It was in the kingdome of Galacia, the season being (as in the depth of winter) very cold, and as then sodainely growne to so extreame and foule a storme, that neuer any winter (I thinke) brought foorth a fowler child : so that the Princes were euen compelled by the haile, that the pride of the winde blew into their faces, to seeke some shrowding place, which a certaine hollow rocks offering it vnto them, they made it their shield against the tempests furie. And so staying there, till the violence thereof was passed, they heard the speech of a couple, who not perceiuing them (being hidde with in that rude canapie) heldo a straunge and pitifull disputation which made them steppe out : yet in such sort, as they might see vnseene. There they perceiued an aged man, and a young, scarcely come to the age of a man, both poorely arayed extreamely weather-beaten ; the olde man blinde, the young man leading him : and yet through all those miseries, in both these seemed to appeare a kind of noblenesse, not suitable to that affliction. But the first words they heard, were of the old man.

Well Lennatus (said he) since I cannot perswade thee to lead me to that which should end my griefe, and thy trouble, let me now entreat thee to leave me : feare not, my miserie cannot be greater than it is, and nothing doth become me but miserie : feare not the danger of my blind steps, I cannot fall worse than I am. And doo not, I pray thee, doo not obstinately continue to infect thee with my wretchednesse. But flie, flie from this region, onely worthy of me. Deare father (answered he) doo not take away from me the onely remnant of my happinesse ; while I haue phwer to doo you seruice, I am not whollie

misrrable. Ah my sonne (said he, and with that he groned, as if sorrow straue to breake his hearte) how euill fits it me to have such a sonne, and how much doth they kindnesse vpbraide my wickednesse ? These dolefull speeches, and some others to like purpose (well shewing they had not bene borne to the fortune they were in), moued the Princess to goe out vnto them and aske the younger what they were ? Sirs (answered he, with a good grace, and made the more agreeable by a certaine noble kinde of pit(ousness) I see well you are straungers, that know not our miserie so well here knowne. that no man dare know, but that we must be miserable. In deede our state is such as though nothing is so needfull vnto vs as pittie, yet nothing is more daungerous vnto vs, then to make our salues so knowne as my stirre pittie. But your presence promiseth, that cruelty shall not ouerrunne hate : and if it did, in truth our state is soncke below the degree of feare.

This old man (whom I leade) was lately rightfull Prince of his countrie of Paphlagonia, by the hard-hearted vngratefulnes of sonne of his, depriued, not onely of his kingdome (wherof no forraine forces were euer able to spoyle him) but of his noight, the riches which nature graunts tn the poorest creatures. Whereby, and by other his unnaturall dealings, he hath him driuen to such griefe, as euen now he would haue had me to have led him to the toppe of this rocke thence to cast him-self headlong to death : and so would haue made me (who receiued my life of him) to be the worker of his destruction. But noble Gentlemen (said he) if either of you haue a father, and feele what duetifull affection is engraffed in a snnnes hart, let me intreate you to canuey this affected Prince to some place of rest and securitie. Amongst your worthie actes it shall be none of the least, that a King, of such might and fame, and so unjustly oppressed, is in any sort by you relieued.

But before they could make him answere, his father began tn speake. Ah my sonne (said he) how euill and Historian are you , that leaue out the chife knotte of all the discourse ? my wickednes, my wickednes. And if thou doest it to spare my earres, (the onely sense nowe left me proper for knowledge) assure they selfe thou dost mistake mh. And I take witness of that Sunne which you see (with that he cast vp his blind eyes, as if he would hunt for light), and wish my self in worse case then I do wish my selfe, which is as euill as, may be if I speake

vntruly ; that nothing is so welcome to my thoughts, as the publishing of my shame. Therefore know you Gentlemen (to whom from my harte I wish that it may not proue ominous foretoken of misfortune to haue mette with such a miser as I am) that whatsoeuer my sonne (O God, that truthe binds me to reproach him with the name of my sonne) hath said, is true. But besides those truthes, this also is true, that hauing had in lawful marriage, of a mother fitte to beare royall children, thls sonne (such one as partly you see, and better shall knowe by my shorte declaration) and so enioyed the expectations in the world of him, till he was growen to justifie their expectations (so as I needed enuie no father for the chiefe comfort of mortalitie, to leaue an other ones-selfe after me) I was carried by a bastarde sonne of mine (if at least I be bounde to beleeue the words of that base woman my concubine, his mother) first to mislike, then to hate, lastly to destroy, to doo my best to destroy, this sonne (I thinke you thinke) vndeserving destruction.

What waise he vsed to bring me to it, if I should tell you, I should tediously trouble you with as much poysonous hypocrisie, desperate fraude, smoothe malice, hidden ambition, and smiling enuie, as in anie liuing person could be harbored. But I list it not, no remembraunce, (no, of naughtines) delights me, but mine own ; and me thinks, the accusing his traines might in some manner excuse my fault, which certainly I loth to doo. But the conclusion is, that I gaue order to some seruants of mine, whom I thought as apte for such charities as my selfe, to leade him out into a forrest, and there to kill him.

But those theeues (better natured to my sonne than my selfe) spared his life, letting him goe, to learne to liue poorely : which he did, giuing himselfe to be a priuate souldier, in a countrie here by. But as he was redy to be greatly aduanced for some noble peeces of seruice which he did, hearde newes of me : who (dronke in my affection to that vnlawfull and vnnaturall sonne of mine) svffered my selfe so to be gouerned by him, that all fauours and punishments passed by him, all offices, and places of importance, distributed to his fauorites : so that ere I was aware, I had left my selfe nothing but the name of King : which he shortly wearie of too, with many indignities (if and thing may be called an indignity, which

was laid vpon me) threw me out of my seat, and put out my eies ; and then (proud in his tyrannie) let me goe, nether imprisoning, nor killing me : but rather delighting to make me feele my miserie ; miserie indeed, if euer there were any ; full of wretchednes, fuller of disgrace, and fullest of guiltines.

And as he came to the crowne by so vnjust meanes, as vniustlie he kept it by force of stranger souldiers in Cittadels, the nestes of tyranny, and murderers of liberitie ; disarming all his own countrimen, that no man durst shew himself a wel-willer of mine ; to say the truthe (I think) few of them being so (considering my cruell follie to my good sonne, and foolish kindes to my vnkinde bastard) : but if there were any who fell to pitie of so great a fall, and had yet any sparkes of vnstained duety lefte in them towardes me, yet durst they not shewe it, scarcely with giuing me almes at their doores ; which yet was the onelie sustenance of my distressed life, no bodie daring to shewe so much charitie, as to lende me a hande to guide my darke steppes : Till this sonne of mine (God knowes, worthie of a more vertuous, and more fortunate father) forgetting my abhominable wrongs, not recking danger, and neglecting the present good way he was in doing himselfe good, came hether to doo this kind office you see him performe towards me, to my, vnspeakable griefe ; not onely because his kindnesse is a glasse euen to my blind eyes, of my naughtines, but that aboue all griefes, it greeues me he should desperatly aduenture the losse of his soul-deseruing life for mine, that yet ow more ro fortune for my deserts, as if he would cary mudde in a chest of christall. For well I know, he that now raigneth, how much soeuer (and with good reason) he despiseth me, of all men despised yet he will not let slippe any aduantage to make away hi, whose iust title (ennobled by courage and goodnes may one day shake the seate of a neauer secure tyrannie.

And for this cause I creaued of him to leade me to the toppe of this rocke, indeede I must confesse, with meaning to free hime from so serpentine a companion as I am. But the finding what I purposed, onely therein since he was borne, showed himselfe disobedient vnto me. And now, Gentlemen, you have the true storie, which I pray you publish to the world, that my mischieuous proceedings may be the glorie of his

filiall pietie, the onely reward no left for so great a merite. And it may be, let me obtain that of you, which my sonne denies me: for neuer was there more pity in sauing any, than in ending me; both because therein my agonies shall ende, and so shall you preserue this excellent young man, who else wilfully folowes his owne ruine.

APPENDIX E

Ballad, as reprinted from Percy's 'Reliques.'

KING LEAR AND THREE DAUGHTERS

'King Leir once ruled in this land,
With princely power and peace,
And had all things with hearts content,
That might his joys increase ;
Amongst those things that nature gave,
Three daughters fair had he,
So princely seeming beautiful,
As fairer could not be.

'So on a time it pleas'd the king
A question thus to move,
Which of his daughters to his grace
Could shew the dearest love:
For to my age you bring content,
Quoth he, then let me hear
Which of you three in plighted torth,
The kindest will apear.

'To whom the eldest thus began,
Dear father, mind, quoth she,
Before your face, to do you good,
My blood shall render'd be:
And for your sake my bleeding heart
Shall here be cut in twain,
Ere that I see your reverend age
The smallest grief sustain.

'And so will I, the second said:
Dear father, for your sake,
The worst of all extremities
I'll gently undertake ;
And serve your highness night and day
With diligence and love ;
That sweet content and quietness ;
Discomforts may remove.

'In doing so, you glad my soul.
The aged king reply'd ;
But what sayst thou my youngest girl,
How is thy love ally'd?
My love (quoth young Cordelia then)
Which to your grace I owe,
Shall be the duty of a child,
And that is all I'll show.

'And wilt thou shew no more, quoth he,
Than doth thy duty bind?
I well perceive thy love is small,
When as no more I find:
Henceforth I banish thee my court,
Thou art no child of mine ;
Nor any part of this my realm ;
By favour shall be thine.

'Thy elder sisters love are more
Than well I can demand,
To whom I equally bestow
My kingdom and my land:
My pompal state and all my goods,
That loving I may
With those thy sisters be maintain'd
Until my dying day.

'Thus flattering speeches won renown,
By these two sisters here:
The third had causeless banishment,
Yet was her love more dear:
For poor Cordelia patiently
Went wand'ring up and down,
Unhelp'd, unpity'd, gentle maid,
Through many an English town:

'Until at last in famous France
She gentler fortunes found ;
Tho poor and bare, yet she was deem'd
The fairest on the ground:
Where when the king her virtues heard,
And this fair lady seen,

With full consent of all his court
He made his wife and queen.

'Her father, 'old' king Leir, this while
With his two daughters staid,
Forgetful of their promis'd loves,
Full soon the same decay'd,
And living in queen Ragan's court,
The eldest of the twain,
She took from him his chiefest means,
And most of all his train.

'For whereas twenty men were wont
To wait with bended knee:
She gave allowance but to ten,
And after scare to three;
Nay, one she thought too much for him:
So took she all away,
In hope that in her court, good king,
He would no longer stay.

'Am I rewarded thus, quoth he,
In giving all I have
Unto my children, and to beg
For what I lately gave?
I'll go unto my Gonorell;
My second child, I know.
Will be more kind and pitiful,
And will relieve my woe.

'Full fast he hies then to her court:
Where when she hears his moan,
Return'd him answer, That she griev'd,
That all his means were gone:
But no way could relieve his wants;
Yet if that he would stay
Within her kitchen, he should have
What scullions gave away.

'When he had heard with bitter tears,
He made his answer then;
In what I did let me be made
Example to all men.

I will return again, quoth he;
Unto my Ragan's court;
She will not use me thus, I hope,
But in a kinder sort.

'Where when he came, she gave command
To drive him thence away:
When he was well within her court
(She said) he would not stay.
Then back again to Gonorall,
The woeful king did hie,
That in her kitchen he might have
What scullion boys set by.

'But there of that he was deny'd,
Which she had promis'd late:
For once refusing, he should not
Come after to her gate.
Thus 'twixt his daughters, for relief
He wand'red up and down;
Being glad to feed on beggars food,
That lately wore a crown.

'And calling to remembrance then
His youngest daughters words,
That said the duty of child
Was all that love affords:
But doubting to repair to her,
Whom he had banish'd so,
Grew frantick mad; for in his mind
He bore the wounds of wo:

'Which made him rend his milk-white locks,
And tressed from his head,
And all with blood bestain his cheeks,
With age and honour spread:
To hills and woods, and wat'ry founts,
He made his hourly moan,
Till hills and woods, and senseless things,
Did seem to sigh and groan.

'Even thus possest with discontents,
He passed o'er to France,
In hopes from fair Cordelia there,
To find some gentler chance:

Most virtuous dame which when she heard
Of this her father's grief,
As duty bound, she quickly sent
His comfort and relief:

'And by a train of noble peers,
In brave and gallant sort,
She gave in charge he should be brought
To Aganippus' court;
Whose royal king, with noble mind
So freely gave consent,
To muster up his knights-at-arms,
To fame and courage bent.

'And so to England came with speed,
To repossesse king Leir,
And drive his daugthers from their thrones
By his Cordelia dear:
Where she, true-hearted noble queen,
Was in the battel slain:
Yet the good king, in his old days,
Possest his crown again.

'But when he heard Cordelia's death
Who died indeed for love
Of her dear father, in whose cause
She did this battel move;
He swooning fell upon her breast,
From whence he never parted;
But on her bosom left his life,
That was so truly hearted.

'The lords and nobles when they saw
The end of these events,
The other sisters unto death
They doomed by consents:
And being dead, their crowns they left
Unto the next of kin:
Thus have you seen the fall of pride,
And disobedient sin.'

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